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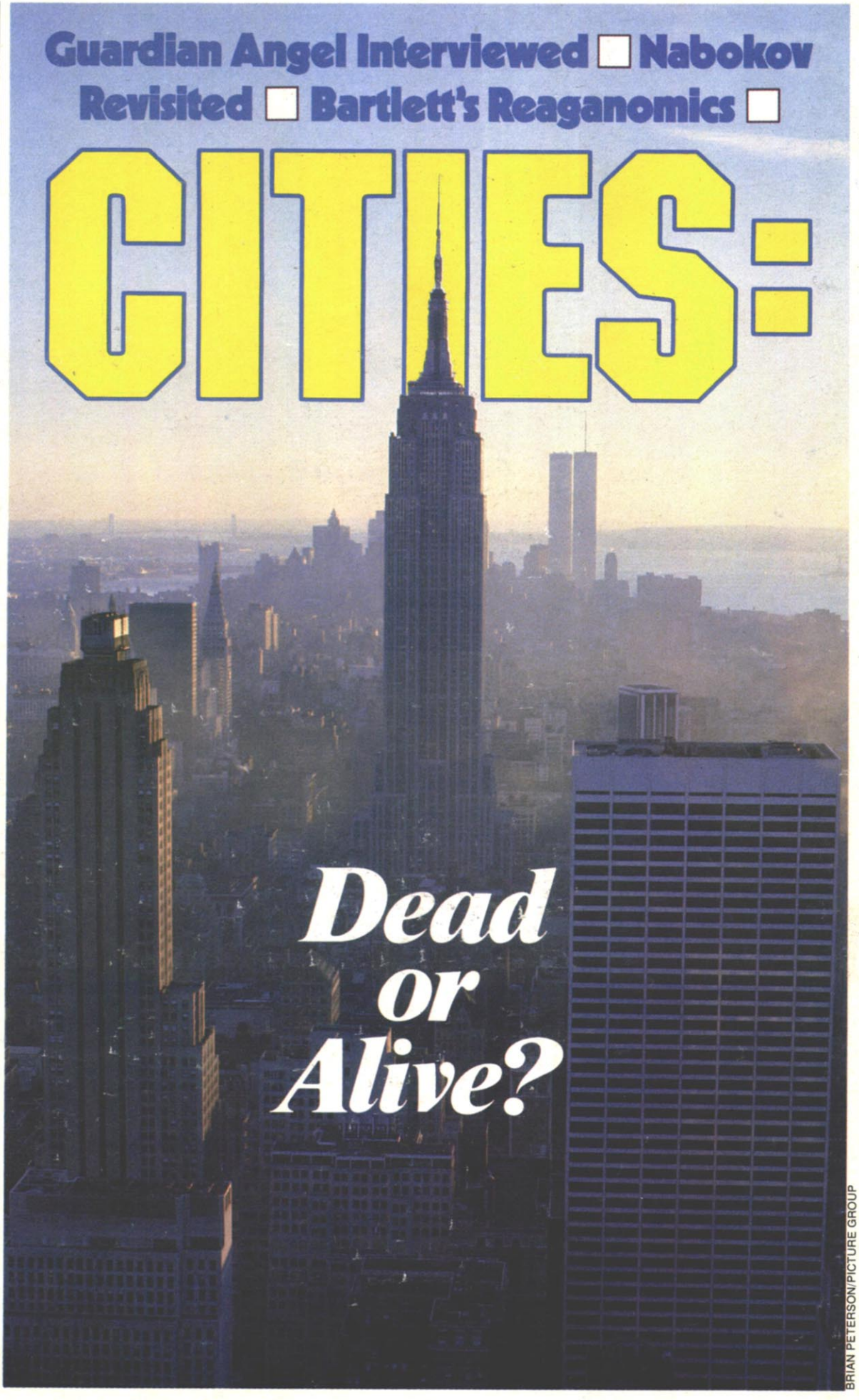

Dead or Alive?

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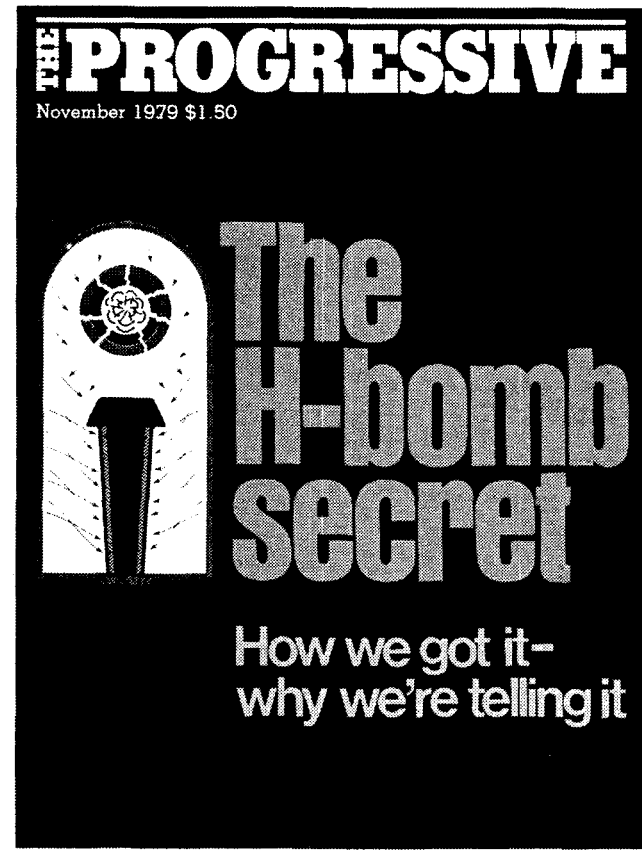

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THE LIBERTARIAN REVIEW

August 1981
Volume 10, No.8

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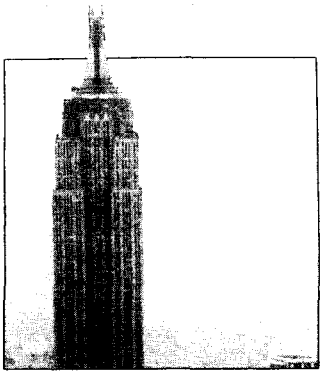

Cities — Dead or Alive?

Billions of dollars have been spent to solve the problems of America's cities, and yet the crime rates, housing shortages, and transportation crises have grown worse. Can we make our cities healthy once again?

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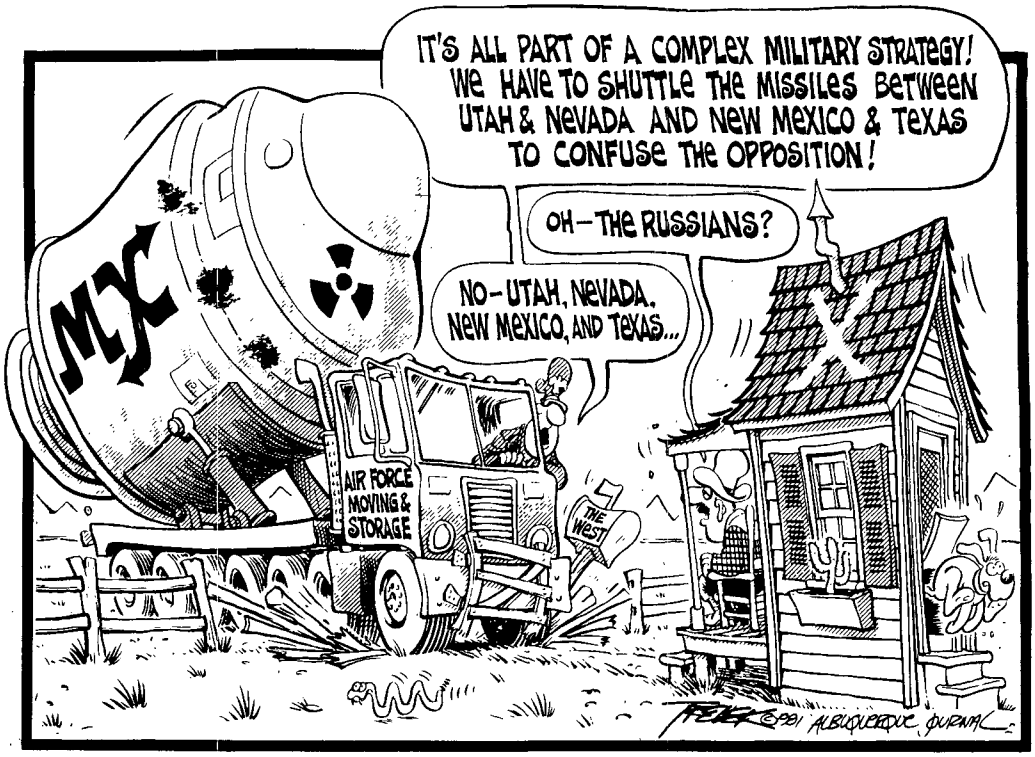
OPENING SHOTS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OH—THE RUSSIANS?
NO—UTAH, NEVADA, NEW MEXICO, AND TEXAS...
MX
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BILL BIRMINGHAM

WHAT A BONUS ... "IF the U.S. refused to base the MX on land because of gripes from ranchers in the open spaces of the Southwest," complains syndicated pundit Joseph Kraft, "the Europeans would never agree to station [American] nuclear weapons on their far more heavily populated territory."

Anything you can say about El Salvador will serve almost as well about Guatemala. Guatemala has a military junta just like her neighbor; starving and oppressed peasants; a squalid oligarchy; political prisoners, repression, and torture; right-wing "death squads" that slaughter dissidents, peasant leaders, and priests (six priests in the last year alone). And, on May 6, the State Department announced that Secretary Haig was sending his aide, former general Vernon Walters, to Guatemala to discuss possible U.S. military assistance for its rulers, so they can crush what the State Department is pleased to call "Cuban-supported Marxist guerrillas." The only thing we learn from history, said Hegel, is that we learn nothing from history. Haig & Co. can't even learn from their morning newspapers.

Senator Lawton Chiles of Florida provides further proof of Hegel's dictum, with his crack-brained scheme to spray Paraquat on Colombian marijuana fields. Congress stopped funding a similar program in Mexico out of fears that the herbicide damaged marijuana smokers' lungs. But the Senator is unafraid. "Most of the studies that have been done are discounting that there will be major health problems," claims Chiles, whose scholarship is as vile as his syntax. "It is now becoming more clear that there is a major health problem in heavy smoking of marijuana itself."

Since the end of the draft the number of women in the armed forces has skyrocketed from 1 percent of the total in 1971 to 8 percent today, with a goal of 12 percent by 1985. But according to the *Washington Post,* "the volunteer Army has quietly enacted what it calls a 'pause' in its recruitment of women," and "the proportion of women in all the services will probably be leveled out at 10 to 12 percent, possibly lower." According to such authorities as ex-Air Force Major General Jeanne M. Holm, the Army may have trouble meeting its personnel requirements as a result — and Reagan did promise not to reimpose conscription unless (ie: until) it was "necessary." Is the "pause" just a ploy to bring back the draft? "I think that's the hidden agenda," the *Post* quotes General Holm as saying. "There are certainly members of Congress and those in the defense community who'd like that."

John McAtee, Reagan's chairman of the Synthetic Fuels Corporation who complained about the "hardship" of living on his $150,000 a year salary, has resigned rather than endure an $80,370 pay cut. McAtee's predecessor, John Sawhill, got $175,000 a year; his successor, Ed Noble, has offered to work for a dollar a year. Before you start dancing in the streets, though, reflect that even Sawhill's bloated salary was only .001 percent of the $17.5 billion SFC budget.

Back in 1979, Jimmy Carter ordered his agency heads to inspect their fiefs and "get rid of all those who are incompetent, except minorities and women." Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Joseph Califano got the axe a few days later. Califano reveals this and other secrets of the Carter Administration in his book *Governing America: An Insider's Report From the White House and the Cabinet.* Jimmykins refused to comment on the book, but his ex-flack Jody Powell

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declared that "whatever lingering doubts I had that we had judged Joe too harshly have been substantially relieved. Hell hath no fury like a fat-cat Washington lawyer scorned."

How did Vice-President George Bush respond to the shooting of the Pope? "To the degree terroristic actions internationally kind of condition society for this kind of thing," Bush told reporters, "it's unacceptable." Otherwise, we suppose, it's OK.

Most media accounts describe the strife in Lebanon in religious terms, with Muslims (Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians) and Christians (the Falange and Major Saad Haddad's forces in the south) at each other's throats, and Jews (Israel) succoring "the Christian communities" (as when they shot down two Syrian helicopters attacking Falange positions near Zahle on April 28). Last April, however, the *Christian Science Monitor* ran two pieces that told a different story. The first, by Helena Coblan in the April 21 issue, reports on Haddad's artillery attack on the Lebanese port city of Sidon on Easter Sunday, April 19. The shelling killed 16 persons and wounded 32 more, whereupon "enraged companions of the victims stormed and tried to burn the local headquarters of the Maronite and Greek Catholic Christian sects" to which most of Haddad's militiamen belong. "Response from the leftist and Muslim parties predominant in Sidon ... was swift. They quickly 'discouraged' those responsible ... and by April 20 were mounting a special protective guard on some Christian sites in the city, local people said." Ms. Coblan points out that "Sidon and its environs — like the rest of the country not under the militias' control — also contain a substantial Christian population. ... Most of these Christians believe they are in no greater danger from the violence that pervades the country than their more numerous Muslim neighbors." In the April 30 *Monitor*, correspondent John Yemma expands on this theme: "Many Syrians, Palestinians, and anti-Falange, anti-Israeli Lebanese are at least as nominally Christian as the [Maronite] Falangists. There are 11 Christian sects in Lebanon. ... Many leaders of these Christian communities ... condemned Israeli military intervention in Lebanon." Muslims are similarly divided. "In Saad Haddad's southern Lebanese 'Christian enclave,' more than half the population is believed to be Shiite Muslim, and Haddad's main financial support comes from American Protestant fundamentalists." There are two major non-religious reasons for the fighting. First: "The Maronites long have been economically and politically dominant in Lebanon, yet they have become a minority. They are fighting to maintain their position." Second: "The Falange, founded in 1936 and modeled on German National Socialism" — which hasn't stopped Israel from giving them 40 U.S.-made Sherman tanks — "is in ideological conflict with the left-leaning Palestinians and Syrians." The interested reader may consult Walid Khalidi's *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon* (published in 1979 by Harvard's Center for International Affairs) for more information. The issue is not merely academic hairsplitting; Ms. Coblan quotes a Lebanese university professor who worries that sectarian bloodshed may indeed engulf all of Lebanon: "Everyone in the West, and the Israelis, are making such a fuss about 'saving' the Christians of Lebanon, they are really stoking the fires of hatred. It might rebound on us all, Christians and Muslims."

François Mitterrand, the new Socialist president of France, has created four new cabinet posts, bringing the total number to 42. And high time, too; for how much longer could the Fifth Republic have lasted without a minister of "leisure time," or of "national solidarity," or the sea, or, especially, "decentralization"?

What's the prime lending rate today? Is it higher, or lower, than when this was written (when most banks charged 20.5 percent)? Why should you care? Why indeed? The House Banking Committee recently surveyed the nation's largest banks and found that in some circles the prime rate — despite the frothings of politicians and the convulsions of the stock market — really doesn't mean very much. Indeed, in May 1980 the big New York banks charged an average of 13 percent interest on 60 percent of their commercial loans, when the prime rate (what they supposedly charged their "preferred customers") was 17 percent. Morgan Guaranty Trust defines its prime lending rate as "the rate of interest publicly announced by the bank in New York City from time to time as its prime rate."

The Miracle of Plutocracy: The California Fair Political Practices Commission recently toted up the money spent in last November's elections. The state legislative races and eleven statewide ballot propositions cost a total of $22 million; business (including agriculture and the health industry) provided 70 percent of that amount, organized labor gave 12 percent (a quarter of which came from public employee unions and pressure groups), and 8 percent came from political parties. The individual citizen, for whose alleged benefit the farce was staged, gave just 5 percent.

Private judges are the coming thing in California, it seems, at least among disputants willing to pay from $100 to $175 an hour rather than wait a year or two for a trial in the public courts. The practice started in 1977, when two Los Angeles attorneys got the presiding judge to refer their case to a retired colleague, who was paid to hear it at once. Now there are 39 retired judges throughout the state available for civil cases — criminal cases cannot be tried privately, yet — whose rulings, unlike those of regular arbitration and mediation services, have the full force of law. Although some customers call it "the greatest thing since sliced bread" not everyone likes free-enterprise justice. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 26, 1981) "the state Judicial Council, the policymaking body for all state courts, [worries] that private judging is causing more judges to retire early because they can make more money taking private cases."

Afghanistan may be "Russia's Vietnam" in more ways than one. An item in (appropriately enough) *Rolling Stone* (May 14, 1981) reveals that Soviet troopers are no less susceptible to the joys of hashish and other recreational drugs than were American GIs in Southeast Asia. "You see the Russian soldiers stoned all the time," the daughter of an Afghan official told the *Stone*. "There's nothing to do in Kabul — all the fighting is in the countryside — except hang out in their compounds and guard things, so they smoke hash all the time."

After years of propaganda against dat ole debbil nicotine, 20 percent of the populace still don't know that smoking causes cancer, and 30 percent are "unaware of the relationship between smoking and heart disease," according to a recent FTC staff report. The Fettered Trade Commission paradoxically blames the warning labels on cigarette packages and ads, which it claims are so familiar ("worn out" is the phrase) that hardly anyone reads them anymore. Actually, it says that less than 3 percent of all *adults exposed* to the labels read them, which to anyone but a bureaucrat suggests that young, beginning smokers do read them — how else could they get "worn out"? — and that nonsmokers get, and need, less exposure than smokers. It is also worth noting that the FTC did not see fit to reveal how many of those it deems ignorant of smoking hazards, do, in fact, smoke.

"One day after calling for higher military pay, President Reagan agreed to a three-month deferral of a military [pay] raise this summer as a cost saving move." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, May 29, 1981) Fast work. ❑

Bill Birmingham is a contributing editor of *LR*.

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EDITORIALS

COPLEY NEWS SERVICE

More forced equality

THE JUNE 22, 1981 ISSUE of *Newsweek* called equal pay the "Women's Issue of the '80s," and since the Equal Pay Act, which was passed in 1963, has had no effect (women's wages are now slightly *lower* than they were in 1963 relative to men's), feminists are trying a new tack. The Equal Pay Act has not been effective, argue feminists, because working women are still concentrated in "pink collar ghetto" jobs—teaching, nursing, secretarial work—where equal pay/equal work rulings do not apply, because the entire field is underpaid. The latest weapon in the struggle is called equal pay for comparable work, and a mid-June decision by the U.S. Supreme Court may have opened the door for future legislation on the issue.

The ruling stated that a group of women guards at a county jail in Oregon had the right to sue for sex discrimination because they were paid less than male guards, even though their jobs were not identical. Judge William H. Rehnquist stated in his dissent that "there can be no Title VII claims of sex-based wage discrimination without proof of 'equal work,'" and that the majority was "trying to usurp Congress's role and impose its views on society no matter what the law said..." because they think that "...there simply must be a remedy for wage discrimination beyond that provided in the Equal Pay Act."

Many other people agree with the majority's implication that there is a need for a remedy to force employers to pay women more money, according to impossibly difficult guidelines that have not yet been worked out. Why for instance, goes the argument, should a highly-trained nurse get paid less than a truck driver? One answer being given is that a truck driver will demand more money than a nurse will. As the *Newsweek* article quotes Ronald C. Pilenzo, President of the American Society for Personnel Administration, "If a secretary will work for $200, pay that, and if you can't get a mechanic for less than $300, you have to pay $300." Women have traditionally settled for less, preferring a low-paying job to none, but today they want and need more: one out of every seven American households now has a woman as its sole support, and inflation is making the two paycheck family a necessity rather than an option.

Another consideration makes competition difficult for women in the job market. Free market economist Thomas Sowell has demonstrated (in *Affirmative Action Reconsidered*) that the difference in wages between men and women may not just be the result of discrimination, but may

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instead result from the disproportionate burden for household and child care placed on married women. Single female academics, according to Sowell, make, on average, 104 percent of what single male academics do. Married women in academia make less, married men more. When working couples learn to share household burdens, working wives will no longer be at such a disadvantage, because they will have more time to devote to their careers.

But there are more causes of wage differentials than women's lower expectations and greater burdens; the old prejudices — that men should get positions because they are able to perform functions that women cannot, or because they are the ones with families to support, or because women will just get pregnant and quit — are dying but not quite dead. The one way women entering the labor market can overcome the prejudice barrier and get the jobs anyway is by working for less. Economic incentives can overcome bigotry.

Just as minimum wage laws prevent teenagers, especially black teenagers, from getting jobs at all, it is to be feared that forced compliance with equal pay for comparative work standards will prevent some women from entering the job market in both traditional or non-traditional fields. In the "pink collar ghetto," employers might replace women with men if they are forced to pay the same wages, they will be obliged to reduce the number of jobs available since their costs will be increased, and in male-dominated fields there will be little incentive to risk hiring women.

Besides, do we really want to create the immense bureaucracy — imagine thousands of lawyers and accountants computing the millions of variables involved in the relative worth of one job over another — which would be necessary to devise and administrate new legislation?

Especially when "equal pay for comparative work" would most likely have the same effect on women that minimum wage laws have on minority teenagers and other groups consisting mainly of unskilled workers: it would reduce their opportunities and create a permanently unemployable underclass which would be called by an old and familiar name — "housewives."

— VV

Reagan's China gamble

"COMMUNIST CHINA ... should, before too long, be obtaining military and economic aid from the U. S...."

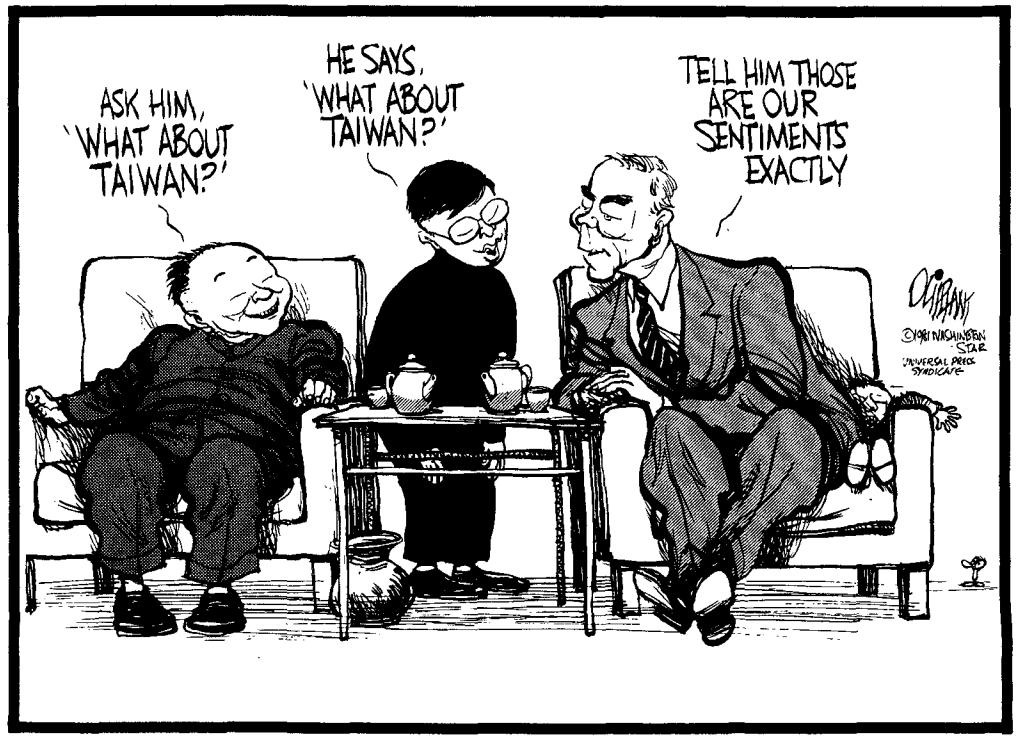
So predicted Roy A. Childs, Jr. in his article, "Playing the China Card" (*LR*, January 1979), shortly after President Carter had announced "normalization" of relations with the People's Republic. Two and a half years later, the prediction has come true; this June Alexander Haig (that archdeacon of anticommunism) visited Peking and announced a U.S.-China agreement on improved trade relations and the sale of weapons to China.

As the parties work out the details of the sale of what the news media persisted on calling "lethal" weapons (presumably as opposed to plastic bats or water pistols), it's a good idea to recall the role which China has played in the American State's policy of interventionism since World War II.

Communists under Mao Tse-tung took control of the Chinese mainland in 1949, pushing the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-Shek onto the island of Taiwan, and precipitating a crisis in the U.S. State Department which has never been totally resolved. The American debate over "who lost China?" fueled the outrages of McCarthyism, breaking and destroying the careers of State Department officials who had believed that China was never "ours" to lose. The Communist takeover was a major motivation for American involvement in Vietnam in the early '60s, as President Kennedy's coterie of "the best and brightest" were determined not to lose another Asian country to the Communists.

But disputes, and even armed clashes, between the People's Republic and the Soviet Union cracked the Communist monolith wide open, permitting American attitudes toward China — once the most feared of all Communist powers — to change. President Nixon led the way with his historic visit to Peking in 1971, and Carter's extension of full recognition in 1978 sealed the deal, or, as foreign policy analysts called it, "played the China card." Having open relations and extending diplomatic recognition — that is, acknowledging the control of a particular government over a given area — makes sense in a non-interventionist foreign policy, but to Nixon, Carter, and now Ronald Reagan, the protracted process of acknowledging the People's Republic as a fact of reality has been a tool — a weapon really — for continued intervention and manipulation directed against the Soviet Union. When sophisticated U.S. fighter planes and ammunition start going to mainland China, the Reagan administration hopes that the Soviets will become sufficiently preoccupied with the military threat to the east that they will slacken their interest in supporting revolutionary forces in the Third World.

This is quite a gamble for Reagan to take, for the Soviets' reaction could turn out to be completely different, moving them to an acceptance of the need for detente with China rather than to heightened conflict. Reagan's gamble, too, is on the continued stability of the Chinese leadership — now consisting of men in their 70s — who have opposed detente with the Soviets but who are under considerable pressure from younger men within the Chinese Communist Party to soften this antagonism. (Only days after Haig's visit, this same leadership initiated conciliatory gestures toward the Soviets.) In a nation where in-


ASK HIM, 'WHAT ABOUT TAIWAN?'
HE SAYS, 'WHAT ABOUT TAIWAN?'
TELL HIM THOSE ARE OUR SENTIMENTS EXACTLY
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tra-party factionalism, purges, rehabilitations, and repurges are the rule rather than the exception, Deng Xiaoping could be back in the provinces tending his backyard steel smelter in two weeks.

What use, at that point would the Chinese make of American weapons? Another invasion of Vietnam, perhaps? It's likely that Reagan hopes to use arms sales to the People's Republic to "buy off" its opposition to American military aid for Taiwan. But if the mainland regime changes either its leadership or its attitudes, might we be treated to the spectacle of a war between Taiwan and the People's Republic, each side using American weapons?

Selling arms isn't the same as selling Coca-Cola or farm equipment. Coming as it does from the U. S. Department of Defense and its contractors, an arms sale would amount to a multi-billion dollar subsidy of the Communist Chinese military complex by the American taxpayers. The best they can hope for now is that, while Reagan holds his China card up for all, particularly the Soviets, to see, it doesn't get trumped decisively by the unexpected actions of the other players in the game.

—CH

Catholics and conscientious objection

WITH WHATEVER ALchemy is used to get the Archbishop of Boston to commit himself, somebody, or somebodies, convinced Humberto Cardinal Medeiros to lend his sponsorship to a new movement to discover and aid Catholic young men who believe they are conscientious objectors. The Justice and Peace Commission of the Boston Archdiocese, which was established in 1978 and has since then actually taken positions on social issues not ordinarily associated with Catholic establishment activism, now intends to participate actively in a program that until very recently would have been unthinkable in this context.

I talked with one of the board members of the Justice and Peace Commission, a committed young woman of, I should estimate with some certainty, left-liberal orientation. She acknowledged that Cardinal Medeiros was not exactly wildly enthusiastic about the idea and required a great deal of prodding. Nevertheless, the program now is in place and some as yet undetermined number of Catholic 19- and 20-year-olds are expected to make known their CO convictions. It should be remembered that during the Vietnam period, most draft boards wouldn't accept the fact that Catholics could be COs, thus inspiring many such to flee the country entirely rather than serve in the military.

Why move, now, to step up what amounts to a form of resistance to the draft? And from a legitimate commission of the Roman Catholic Church?

The answer, I think the obvious answer, is that we are moving not so slowly toward reinstitution of the draft. President Carter's dissembling notwithstanding, and President Reagan's campaign rhetoric against the peacetime draft notwithstanding, many signs point in the direction of a new call to arms. Among the signs: the retreat by former President Nixon and by Senator Barry Goldwater from their previous commitment to the voluntary military.

Moreover, we see in the new militancy on the Right, the aligning of God with whatever the self-proclaimed keepers of the conservative tablets want to accentuate, a simple and quite obvious forum for the development of a new draft. When people begin to associ-

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ate the divinity with sabre-rattling, not an uncommon association in the past but somewhat trendy at the moment in America, the same people begin to associate opposition to compulsory military service with anti—anti-whatever, but in this case, anti-Americanism. We are already hearing quite enough blather from the extremists about just what a "true" American is, and before long—I'll lay money on this if you like — we'll be hearing from the TV evangelists and their acolytes the Good News that God has come out in favor of the draft.

An objection based on the argument from personal choice won't hold water with these people, since they have never heard or at least never liked what they've heard about the subversive notion that individuals must be free in America to choose their own lives and lifestyles. Nor will an argument from common sense make a dent in the new truculence: to tell these guys that the best defense for America isn't likely to come from a couple million kids dragooned into service, well, it won't wash.

We shall in short order see a coalition in favor of the draft, which will look like this: 1) the demagogic politicians trying to be more militaristic than thou, will declare the voluntary military a failure and will insist that only selective service of some sort can remedy our deficiencies; 2) the evangelists will get the Word from On High and pass it on to the faithful, and it'll sound like whatever the pro-draft people sound like in civilian talk; 3) the closet racists will remind us that the voluntary military is disproportionately non-white — so are the Boston Celtics, but never mind—and so we've got to have a draft, Or Else; 4) and selected military men will moan and groan about the inadequacies of those who choose to serve in the military and will pine for the days when those who didn't choose to serve were made to serve.

In the coming climate, the Catholics now settling in to aid COs will need lots of help, perhaps God's, too. ❑

— David Brudnoy

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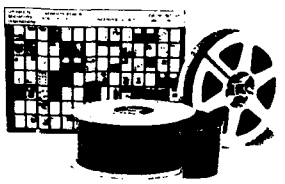

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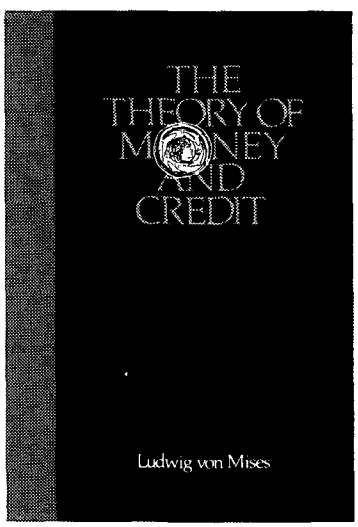

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by Ludwig von Mises

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COMMERCE DEPT.

The agriculture cartel

SHELDON RICHMAN

NOWHERE IS THE GOVernment's exploitation of people (especially the poor) for the sake of privileged clients so stark as in agriculture. A single dramatic, yet typical, illustration demonstrates this.

The United States does not have a free-enterprise dairy industry. It has, rather, a government-sponsored cartel, devised by and run for several large dairy cooperatives. The law mandates a minimum price for dairy products and restricts where dairy producers may sell their products. Imports are also restricted. The government supports the minimum price by buying up whatever goods cannot be sold at this above-market level.

Since the U.S. Department of Agriculture is the buyer of last resort, dairy farmers have an incentive to produce more than the free market would have called for. Shrunken demand, a response to the artificially high price, expands this surplus even more. The results of years of this political cartel is a government hoard of 411 million pounds of butter, 641 million pounds of nonfat dry milk and 439 million pounds of cheese. Each *month* the Department of Agriculture acquires some 10 million pounds of butter.

You may wonder where the government keeps such incredible amounts of dairy products. It has no storage facilities, so it must lease private space. The butter alone, which must be kept frozen, costs $1.07 million *a month* to store. Since storage space is scarce, Agriculture Secretary John Block has said he expects butter will soon be kept in his office.

Most people probably don't realize that the federal government holds prices artificially high and hoards consumer products in this way. Only this can explain their failure up to now to storm the USDA, tear it down brick by brick, and lynch the bureaucrats.

But now they have an opportunity to contemplate government's raw injustice. The magnitude of its "program" was revealed in the newspapers recently, when the White House was reported to have had second thoughts about selling surplus butter on the world market. USDA wants to get rid of the surplus because the butter is going bad (frozen butter lasts about three years and much of it is that old), and storage costs are high. But the White House balked, because it figures the Soviet Union will probably buy most of it. The world price of butter is about $1.05 per pound, barely half the American retail price. So the Reagan administration is uncomfortable with what would look like a subsidy for the Soviets, especially since it just sold 30,000 metric tons of butter to Poland at 33 percent less than the world price. The administration now apparently intends to sell butter to foreign countries only if they promise not to resell it to the Soviets.

A government source says the USDA can't give the butter away in this country, say to schools and churches, because "they are saturated" with surplus dairy products already. Even if the government finds a way to sell it to someone other

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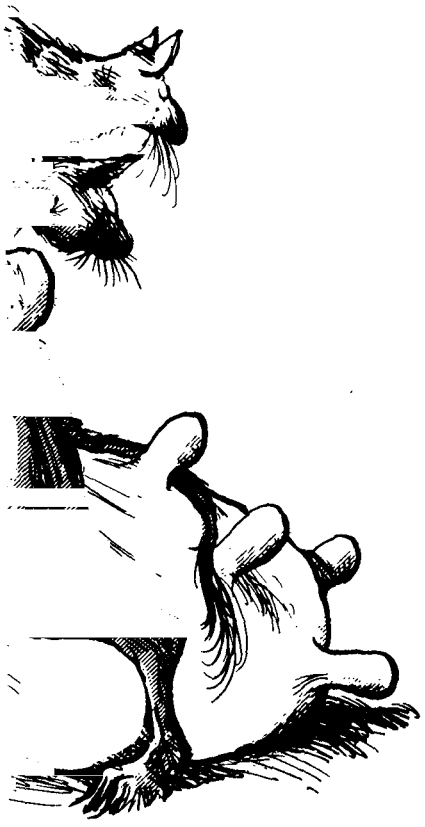

than the Soviets, its troubles would not be over. The European Economic Community and New Zealand, the only international butter traders, would be furious and would claim that the U.S. was tampering with the world price.

Let's put this matter into perspective: At least since the New Deal, American politicians have espoused the politics of the "safety net." Indeed, President Reagan, Jack Kemp, and the other prophets of the supply side routinely affirm the government's responsibility to maintain a minimum standard of living for those who cannot achieve it on their own. This is why Reagan declared seven major federal programs off limits to the budget-slashing moguls.

But radical political analysts have long pointed out that the safety net is a farce. It consists of a few crumbs intended to buy off the poor and keep them from learning that the state has blocked off virtually every self-help route out of poverty. The state gives poor people food stamps, but, through the minimum wage, licensing, regulations, taxation, and union legislation, it keeps them from finding entry-level jobs or starting their own businesses or entering the crafts.

Now we see other evidence of the state's hypocrisy regarding the poor. Massive government programs aimed at helping certain large farming operations force up the price of food and divert it from consumer markets to government warehouses. Then when the warehouses fill up, the government unloads the food abroad, at rates Americans would regard as a bargain.

The people shedding crocodile tears because the food-stamp program isn't as big as they want would be more convincing if they took after the entire U.S. Department of Agriculture, which exists only to loot the American people for the sake of certain privileged farmer-businessmen. The politicians who claim to be free enterprisers are no more honorable than these liberals. President Reagan, Senator Jesse Helms, and others talk a good game, but what do they do? Reagan has proposed that dairy price supports not be increased as frequently as before, but he is not planning to challenge the programs themselves. Nor can most conservatives be expected to oppose the programs, since they favor them for the crops in their own states: for instance, Helms votes for tobacco supports; Senator Steven Symms of Idaho votes for sugar supports; Representative Richard Schulze of Pennsylvania opposes mushroom imports.

The biggest villains in the story, however, are the agribusinessmen who promote the programs. They pay tribute to free enterprise, then explain why their particular crop is unique. Perishability is the most popular reason. But as Professor Richard McKenzie of Clemson University points out, many other things that are perishable don't get this special treatment. He reveals the claim to be a simple rationalization for protection from market risks.

Sometimes just plain *chutzpah* seems the only explanation for the farmers' activities. For example, the same dairymen who support price supports and milk marketing orders want a prohibition against the importation of the dairy substitute, casein. Casein is a dairy derivative that the American farmers could produce themselves, but don't, because its price is not held high by the government. Not only do they refuse to make it, they don't want foreign producers (mostly in New Zealand) to send any here. Pat Healy, Washington director of the National Milk Producers Federation, says his members don't want American consumers to do without casein; they'd be glad to produce it—if the government supports the price.

The dairymen are not the only culprits. Many fruit growers are of the same ilk. Farm associations and co-ops such as Sunkist have erected government-sponsored marketing restrictions that hold up the price and cause the destruction of millions of pounds of fruit each year. A recent *Inquiry* magazine story (May 11) noted that in California 3.5 million pounds of oranges will be allowed to rot in the sun this year alone. When a USDA official was reminded of the hungry people who might like to buy cheap fruit, he said, in effect, "Let them take vitamins."

Fortunately, there are a few heroic mavericks among the growers. *Inquiry* quoted one, Carl Pescosolido, who doesn't like the government telling him how many oranges he can sell: "They say these regulations are democratic. Yes, as democratic as the Kremlin. In fact, we call them the Red Menace. On second thought, I wish you wouldn't use that analogy because I don't believe communist Russia would ever allow this kind of waste of food. It's not even a good socialistic system. I don't know what it is."

The agency that maintains most of these programs, the Commodity Credit Corporation, is a creation of the New Deal, so on the surface it is ironic for conservatives (who hate the New Deal) to leave it untouched. (Actually, it is not so ironic, since the New Deal and FDR had substantial big-business support.) Reagan was right long ago when he said fascism was the basis of the New Deal. Anyone who doubts this should study its legacy in agriculture, where a few large farm operations benefit at the expense of small farmers, consumers, and the poor. Even USDA concedes that its rules have fostered large farms.

A similar system of privilege was assaulted more than a century ago when Richard Cobden, the businessman and free-market radical, led a movement for free trade and peace:

> If government desires to serve the interests of our commerce, it has but one way. War, conquest, and standing armaments cannot aid, but only oppress trade; diplomacy will never assist it — commercial treaties can only embarrass it. The only mode by which the Government can protect and extend our commerce is by retrenchment, and a reduction of the duties and taxes upon the ingredients of our manufacturers and the food of our artisans. ❑

Sheldon Richman is the editor of *Competition*, the newsletter of the Council for a Competitive Economy.

COMING SOON IN LR

Jennifer Roback on Mexican Labor

Tom Palmer reviews Philip Green's egalitarianism

Joan Kennedy Taylor on Crime and Punishment

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WHAT MAKES CITIES LIVE

JOAN KENNEDY TAYLOR

Cities. The treasures of our civilization's heritage arose in cities: art, drama, philosophy, science, political theory, legal theory, all began to develop in the Greek city-states or in the city of Rome. And our applied sciences and technologies and patterns of exchange began in medieval cities. "City air makes free," they said in medieval Europe, because the serf who managed to get to a city was indeed beginning a new life. This lure of the cities is part of America's history, too—our Northeastern cities have experienced wave after wave of different people from different places and backgrounds—Jews, Italians, Poles, Germans, rural blacks, Puerto Ricans, hillbillies—all coming to the city to make their fortunes. As Kate Simon said in the 1960s, in her discursive guidebook, *New York Places and Pleasures,* "The little dreams stay at home, and the big dreams come to New York."

Yet today, when one says *cities,* one thinks of problems. The crisis of the cities. Inner-city poverty. Drug-taking and drug-pushing. Crime. Traffic snarls and inefficient and expensive transportation. Delapidated housing, in short supply. Devastated areas that look as if an invading army had laid waste whole neighborhoods and levelled block after block of homes. Has the city outlived its function? Are cities dying?

This issue of *The Libertarian Review* asks that question, but it is not a simple one to answer. For what has happened to the cities of America is part and parcel of what has happened to all American life in this century. Life means problems and challenges and mistakes. Only stagnation or death can protect people—or cities—from the uncertainty of constantly having to face new problems and challenges and from the possibility of mistakes and failure as well as achievement and success. And for several generations at least, Americans have followed a false dream—the dream that a riskfree life was possible, if only we put more and more reliance on government.

Cities, like people, need freedom in order to live. This is a metaphor, of course; a city is not a living organism. But it *is* a spontaneous order, like free market exchange, like a language. These things cannot be planned by government—all that government can do is interfere with the natural processes that would have arisen otherwise, and distort and stultify them. And that is what government planning and urban renewal and zoning and monopolistic franchises and all the other bureaucratic programs and policies have done to our cities.

So the answer to the question, *Are cities dying?* has to be, *Yes, if present policies are continued.* But to the further question, *Can they be revived?* we at *The Libertarian Review* think the answer is also *Yes.*

This doesn't mean that any particular city will necessarily revive and live. In a climate of freedom, cities rise and fall. Some will succeed as cities, and others will not. But it is not a sentimental falsehood for cities to wear the aura of romance they have sported so proudly for so many years; as a class, they deserve it. *Civilization,* after all, means *the life of cities.*

As Chris Hocker points out in his article in this issue on transit, perhaps the most interesting writing that has been done about cities has been done by Jane Jacobs, the author of two exciting and iconoclastic books, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Random House, 1961) and *The Economy of Cities* (Random House, 1969). Almost alone among contemporary writers, Jacobs has investigated the phenomenon of the city as a spontaneous order. In her first book, she examined the contemporary American city—what makes streets and parks safe, the importance of diversity, how parks and streets and neighborhoods are used, the need for buildings of different ages within a city, why slums develop (and why some neighborhoods "unslum"), and the inadequacies of the conventional concepts of urban renewal, low-income government housing, zoning, and city planning. In *The Economy of Cities,* she undertook an even larger task, challenging another widely-held belief, this time "the conventional belief that cities are superficial economically while rural production and rural life are 'basic.'"

On the contrary, claims Jacobs, cities are the primary cradles of economic development, and it is they that invent rural development. Without cities, she says, no economic development will take place. For what is economic development? It is the discovery of what she calls "new work," which grows out of old work, and not in an orderly, planned fashion. The Xerox process, for instance (she tells us) was developed commercially by a small photo-supply company, a seemingly logical development for such a business. But it was not *invented* there—"it was invented by a worker in the

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patent department of an electrical equipment manufacturer in New York to solve a problem that had arisen in his own work: the expense and inconvenience of obtaining copies of drawings and other documents used in patent research." The brassiere was not developed by one of the companies that manufactured undergarments, but by a dressmaker who found that it improved the fit of the dresses she made. And so on.

For new work to be able to develop out of old work, several things are necessary — access to many specialized businesses which can provide the back-up services and supplies necessary to a new venture, access to a market, perhaps, above all, freedom for the worker to take a chance on branching out and following the possibilities of the new work. And today, access to capital. All of this means cities. It is cities, according to Jacobs, that are "places where adding new work to older work proceeds vigorously. Indeed, any settlement where this happens becomes a city."

But the conditions that foster new work best are not the conditions that seem most efficient. They are conditions where jobs seem to be duplicated, where there are many alternative suppliers and extreme specialization. It doesn't add to the efficiency of any existing organization for workers to be constantly branching off and developing new projects that are only marginally related to the purpose of the organization, so such organizations will fight the tendency for new work to develop and for valued employees to leave; they will make employees sign exclusive contracts promising not to go into business on their own or "enter into competition," they will bring lawsuits against those who do leave; they will try to make the town in which they operate into a company town, which is the most efficient environment for their purposes. It takes the diversity of a city to provide the necessary opportunities for novelty to develop. As Jacobs puts it,

> The point is that when new work is added to older work, the addition often cuts ruthlessly across categories of work, no matter how one may analyze the categories. Only in stagnant economies does work stay docily within given categories. And wherever it is forced to stay within prearranged categories — whether by zoning, by economic planning, or by guilds, associations or unions — the process of adding new work to old can occur little if at all.

And later, she points out that this process must not be confused, as it sometimes is, with the division of labor. It is not division of labor that creates vital cities.

> Division of labor, in itself, creates nothing. It is only a way of organizing work that has already been created. ... Dividing existing work into tasks is by no means confined to advancing economies. It is also practiced in the most stagnant economies, where men and women spend their entire working lives at very specialized tasks: tapping rubber trees, or herding goats, or loading bananas, or twisting fibers, or dancing in temples, or mining salt, or crushing ore, or carrying baskets of dirt for public works, or cultivating corn and beans. A stagnant economy may lack almost everything, but not division of labor.

But if cities need freedom to perform this function of cradling economic development, then it is no wonder that they have become stagnant. Over the years, people have not been encouraged to solve problems freely in the "chaos" of the marketplace—each new city problem that has arisen has been an excuse for a new encroachment of government, as this cities issue of *The Libertarian Review* examines. Drugs and urban crime? Roy A. Childs asks what the truth is about the connection between heroin and crime, examines our assumptions about heroin use, heroin supply, heroin's effects, the cost of heroin, and heroin treatment centers, and comes up with some surprising conclusions. Housing? Bruce Cooley examines the government programs that are supposed to help the development of city housing—building codes, zoning, urban renewal, and rent control, and asks, *What will be the effects of these programs as the baby-boom generation comes looking for places to live in the cities of the '80s?* Transit? Chris Hocker takes a look at what government has done for the cities in *that* area, from trolley franchises to Flxible buses, and has a few suggestions of his own as to what direction future solutions to transit problems might take. Finally, *LR*'s interview is with an inner-city resident who has *not* given up hope, Curtis Sliwa, the founder of the organization known as the Guardian Angels, which is doing something about the problem of urban crime by volunteering to patrol the subways and parks of several cities.

Will the cities survive? If Jane Jacobs is right, the question we should be asking is an even more serious one, *Will the capacity for economic development survive?* To both questions, the answer is the same. The individual capacity to solve problems is still there, as we can see in the rise of the Guardian Angels. But the government programs and the bureaucrats are there, too. Building codes are still enforced; huge, expensive buses are still being mandated for city use, and no competition with them is allowed; city officials fear to encourage self-help patrols. As Jacobs says, "People who are prevented from solving their own problems cannot solve problems for their cities, either."

But there is a new spirit alive in the land, a spirit of self-reliance, and there is a growing distrust of government solutions to our problems. To the bureaucrats who warn the tax-cutters that "essential services" will be cut, the tax-cutters are beginning to respond, *Good.* Curtis Sliwa said to *LR*'s summer intern, Robert Capozzi, "People have to begin assuming more of the responsibility of their daily lives themselves."

If this spirit prospers, it will succeed in cutting back the thicket of government programs and regulations and prohibitions that have grown up like brambles around the possibilities that are our cities. Then the romance that many of us feel still exists in cities, as places where the as-yet-undreamed-of can become realized, can become the spirit of the 1980s. And our cities will live.

But perhaps Jane Jacobs should be allowed to have a final word, and a final warning.

> In human history, most people in most places most of the time have existed miserably in stagnant economies. Developing economies have been the exceptions, and their histories, as developing economies, have been brief. Now here, now there, a group of cities grows vigorously by the processes I have been describing in this book and then lapses into stagnation for the benefit of people who have already become powerful. I am not one who believes that flying saucers carry creatures from other solar systems who poke curiously into our earthly affairs. But if such beings were to arrive, with their marvelously advanced contrivances, we may be sure we would be agog to learn how their technology worked. The important question however, would be something quite different: What kinds of governments had they invented which had succeeded in keeping open the opportunities for economic and technological development instead of closing them off? Without helpful advice from outer space, this remains one of the most pressing and least regarded problems. [The Economy of Cities]

Joan Kennedy Taylor is senior editor of *LR*.

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TRANSIT

As If People Mattered

CHRIS HOCKER

A selection of recent newspaper and magazine headlines tells the whole story: "The Mess in Mass Transit"; "Nation's Mass Transit Heads Toward Big Jam as Passengers Increase"; "Rumbling Toward Ruin." Readers find it increasingly difficult *not* to encounter articles about disasters in city transit systems: fares increase, systems run out of money, operators go on strike, construction is halted or delayed, vehicles suffer expensive breakdowns.

It's all unquestionably true: urban mass transit is in a shambles. It isn't working the way it was "supposed" to. On the surface, the central problem appears to be money. Most urban transit systems, rail or bus, are enormously expensive, requiring massive government subsidies just to keep them operating, and billions of dollars more to expand or renovate them. Revenue from passenger fares covers only a small fraction of the cost, and taxpayers are getting tired of making up the difference, not necessarily because they oppose transit, but because they feel they've been had by planners, administrators, and elected officials.

In the 1960s, when the development of urban mass transit became part of national government policy, visions of sleek, shiny, efficient transportation systems were offered to voters in return for a few pennies of their tax dollars. Twenty years later, voters may not know what makes a transit system work right, but they do know that massive cost overruns, construction delays of months and years, and endless repetitions of the refrain "We need more money from you people" by public officials wears a little thin. Taxpayer discontent has transferred to municipal governments and state legislatures, which are now starting to rebel against state and federal dictates. Last November, for example, the Boston-area transit system ran out of money and narrowly escaped being shut down completely for the remainder of the year. Local governments had refused additional money, and the Massachusetts legislature, in special session, reluctantly agreed to provide $41 million in supplementary funds, thus saving the system for the moment. But all parties to this particular crisis—the taxpayers, the transit system, local governments, and the state—know that the problem is far from solved, and the taxpayers justifiably feel frustrated and resentful.

At the national level, the Reagan administration has indicated its skepticism, at least rhetorically, about continuing the present degree of federal involvement in mass transit. Reagan has said, "There's no reason for someone in Sioux Falls to pay federal taxes so that someone in Los Angeles can get to work on time by public transportation." Federal tightfistedness with transit subsidies, if real, would be a marked reversal of federal policies in the '60s and '70s, when local authorities were encouraged to seek federal grants for transit and to think of them as "free." The Reagan view appears to be that transit is a problem to be solved by state and local governments; if he follows through on this philosophy, these entities, no longer able to hide transit costs under the cloak of "free" money from Washington, will have to figure out other ways to provide urban mass transit.

One alternative, of course, would be to abandon altogether the complex of planning and subsidies in urban mass transit in favor of a spontaneous market system. In all likelihood, however, the market alternative will be the last to be tried, for the commitment to present concepts of urban mass transit on the part of officials and planners remains strong. For the next several years at least, government at all levels will continue to "find" money in increasing quantities to keep transit systems running, until the day when the tension mounting between taxpayers and government requires a complete reevaluation of the entire concept of mass transit.

Most contemporary transportation planners, public and private, make their decisions in the context of the past. They resist top-to-bottom reexamination of the concepts which

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DEAD OR ALIVE?

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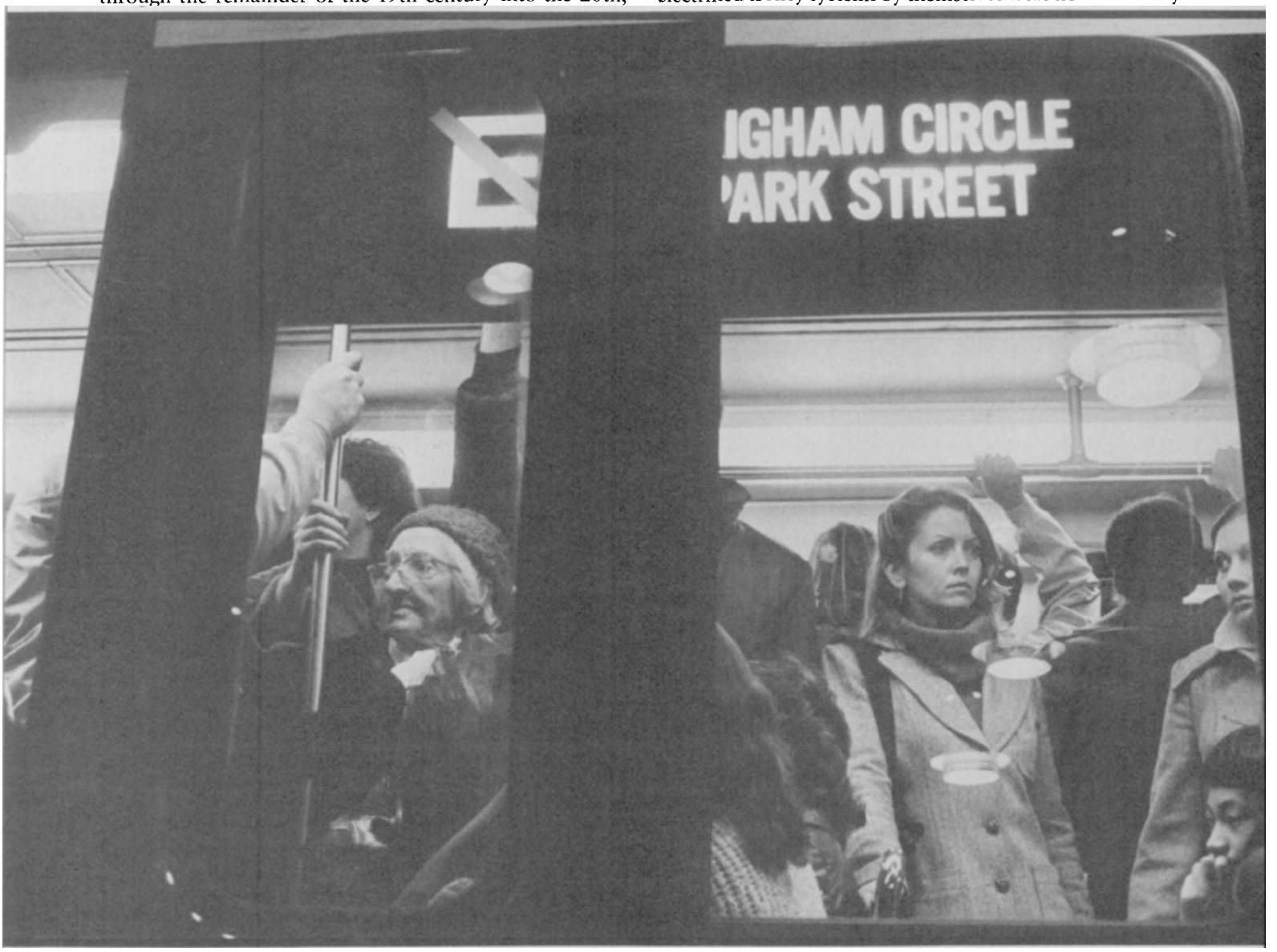
underlie transit policy, and their resistance is understandably bolstered by virtually universal misconceptions surrounding the history of urban mass transit in the United States.

According to *Federal Assistance for Urban Mass Transportation*, a booklet published by the Urban Mass Transportation Authority (UMTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation, "a 12-passenger horse-drawn carriage ... along Broadway in New York City" in 1827 was the first urban mass transit conveyance. "From that humble beginning," the booklet continues, "America's urban mass transit grew through the remainder of the 19th century into the 20th,



moving millions of passengers via a patchwork of private transit operators." In other words, says UMTA, in the bad old days we had all these uncoordinated private systems running amok, providing transportation systems apparently at random, with no *unity*, no *direction*, no *plan*, until the federal government brought centrally-planned civilization to the barbarians.

There *were* serious problems plaguing urban mass transit before the involvement of UMTA, but the problems stemmed from no lack of government intervention. The whole idea that mass transportation was a mishmash of private chaos is 99$^{44}/_{100}$ percent pure myth. Urban mass transit has almost never been private in any real sense, and to the extent it operated subject to market forces at all, it was affected adversely by direct competition from government.

In the early 1900s, mass transit in major cities consisted mainly of trolleys powered by electricity which ran fixed routes and were attached to overhead wires. Many of these systems provided cheap transportation, but they were *not private*. They usually were an adjunct to the city's electric power company, which was "private" in the same way that American Telephone and Telegraph is private today; in other words, it was a monopoly public utility. In most cases, the electrified trolley systems by themselves were not financially successful, and the losses were absorbed by the power companies that owned them. Perhaps the best-known example of this was Pacific Electric's "Big Red Car" trolley system in the Los Angeles area which connected towns and cities from Newport Beach in Orange County all the way to Redlands in San Bernardino County, an enormous distance even by Southern California standards. Between 1912 and 1952, the Big Red Cars showed a profit only eight times, but they kept rolling because Pacific Electric could afford to pick up the deficit.

The nation's "patchwork" of these quasi-private systems began to change after 1935, when Congress passed an-

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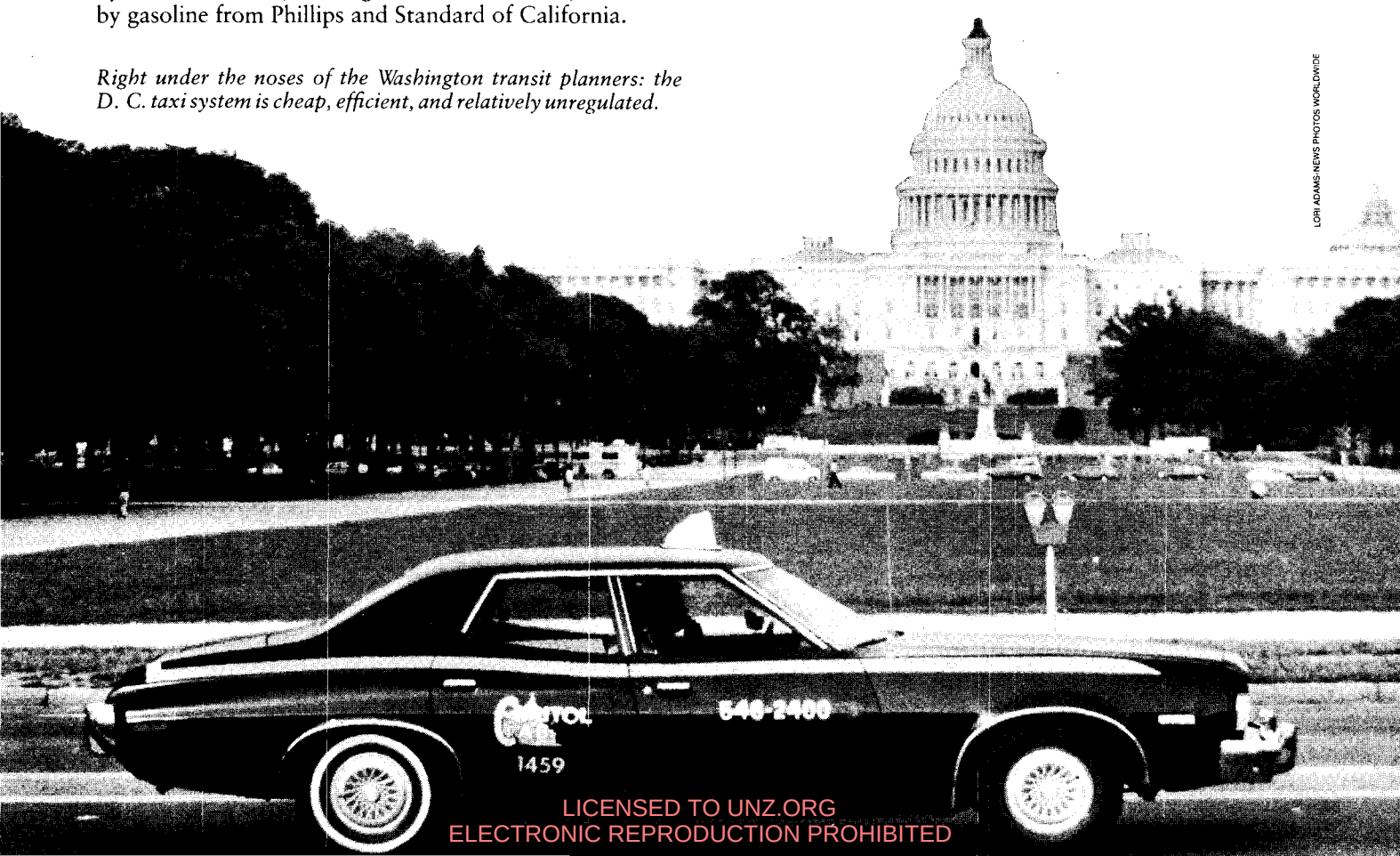
timonopoly legislation requiring municipal public utilities to divest themselves of their transit adjuncts. Since most of the transit systems were financially uncertain at best, city governments were reluctant to take them over directly, preferring instead, when possible, to sell them to operating companies which were permitted to run the systems without competition.

The action of Congress in 1935 precipitated transit crises all over the country, which were taken advantage of by General Motors, Firestone Tire and Rubber, Mack Manufacturing (of Mack trucks), Phillips Petroleum, and Standard Oil of California. These five corporations banded together to give financial backing to National City Lines, Inc., a small midwestern bus operator, which began dealing with city governments to purchase trolley systems and convert them to bus systems — featuring, not surprisingly, buses built by General Motors and Mack, running on Firestone rubber, and fueled by Phillips and Standard of California. In the course of more than 20 years, National City Lines and other similar front companies used over $9 million from the five corporations to buy up and convert scores of transit systems in cities located in 16 states, including Los Angeles, Oakland, Salt Lake City, El Paso, St. Louis, Tampa, and Baltimore. Interpretations of the reasons behind the group action vary. Cities were expanding in the '30s, adding geographical area beyond the range of their trolley tracks, and GM, which had experienced little success in selling buses to cities prior to 1935, apparently saw an opportunity to encourage the conversion of transit systems from electrified trolleys to gasoline (later diesel) powered buses. Darker interpretations suggest that GM and the other companies had no real desire to sell buses and related equipment, but wanted rather to destroy the trolley systems, forcing transportation consumers into private automobiles — built by General Motors, running on Firestone rubber, and fueled by gasoline from Phillips and Standard of California.

Whatever the true motivations, the result helped hasten the decline of trolley systems. Tracks and overhead wires were ripped up and torn down. Bridges and tunnels constructed for trolleys were abandoned. The primary mode of mass transit became the bus, and virtually every major city — even those with rail systems, such as New York, with its old subway system, and Washington, with its new Metrorail — now relies heavily on buses to haul passengers within the city itself. In smaller cities, of course, the bus is the only means of mass transit. And in virtually no city of significant size are buses operated by private enterprise in any true sense. Of the 279 urban areas in the United States with populations of 50,000 or more, only 34 have privately-owned bus systems (of which only four operate in the top 100 cities in population). These private operators are under contract to the city, which grants them a virtual monopoly over city transit.

Urban mass transit is often cited as a classic example of an area in which private enterprise doesn't work; in fact, where it can't work, and in which government must step in to provide a needed service. In some cases, however, governments and "private" companies operating under exclusive government contracts have stepped in to *prevent* market alternatives from ever taking hold. In the early 1970s in Harlem, the predominantly black section of New York City, Dr. Thomas Matthews started his own financially successful bus system to carry patients between hospitals and their homes; the city shut his system down. At about the same time, in Orange County, California, a small group of young counterculture types painted an old school bus pink and began hauling housewives and children to and from shopping centers; the county transit district stopped that. And in San Mateo County, California, when a bus company started

Right under the noses of the Washington transit planners: the D. C. taxi system is cheap, efficient, and relatively unregulated.



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Most urban transit problems are attributable to and have been exacerbated by the implementation of conventional planning wisdom.

a commuter bus service from the suburbs to San Francisco, the state Public Utility Commission quickly put an end to it — at the insistence of Greyhound Bus, which presumably wanted the state to leave all the driving to them. A market system of urban transit can work, but making it work involves rethinking the entire basis of present day urban mass transit policy, particularly of transit planning.

The way things ought to be

The "psychohistory" of urban mass transit is not significantly different from the psychohistory of all attempts at public planning, particularly urban planning, over the past 80 or 90 years. Conventional planners view cities as disorganized, chaotic jumbles which must be "put right." They determine that people in cities are not behaving in their own best interests and therefore must be given different, more correct, more rational environments if they are to be truly happy and fulfilled. This has been the basic planning premise behind such concepts as urban renewal, redevelopment, and open space, and it's the basic premise behind urban mass transit planning. And, of course, there are always individuals, companies, and organizations who benefit from the implementation of such a view and encourage it to the point where the resulting system takes on a life and momentum of its own, even if the planners have second thoughts.

Undoubtedly the leading opponent of the "City-as-Chaos" view has been Jane Jacobs, who believes that most urban problems are attributable to and have been exacerbated by the implementation of conventional planning wisdom, and who further believes that cities, left to themselves, generate their own spontaneous order. In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* she writes:

> Cities are an immense laboratory of trial and error, failure and success. . . . This is the laboratory in which city planning should have been learning and forming and testing its theories. Instead the practioners and teachers of this discipline (if such it can be called) have ignored the study of success and failure in real life, have been incurious about the reasons for unexpected success, and are guided instead by principles derived from the behavior and appearance of towns, suburbs, tuberculosis sanitaria, fairs, and imaginary dream cities — from anything but cities themselves.

She continues:

> Planners, architects of city design, and those they have led along with them in their beliefs. . . have gone to great pains to learn what the saints and sages of modern orthodox planning have said about how cities *ought* to work and what *ought* to be good for people and businesses in them. They take this with such devotion that, when reality intrudes, threatening to shatter their dearly won learning, they must shrug reality aside. [Emphasis in original]

Twenty years after Jacobs wrote those words, reality has intruded with considerable force in at least one area of urban mass transit: modernistic rail systems such as San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Metrorail in Washington D.C., both of which have exceeded planners expectations only in terms of cost, but which otherwise have been characterized by construction delays, equipment breakdowns, and labor problems, while failing to appreciably alter transportation patterns or alleviate traffic congestion. The planning passion for fixed rail systems has died down, at least for the moment, as a result of these experiences; the next large-scale system is likely to be built in Canada rather than the United States. This is not meant to imply that fixed rail transit systems are inherently unworkable — Walt Disney built a monorail 25 years ago and seriously proposed building an expanded, private, profit making version for the Los Angeles area — but rather to suggest that these systems have been especially prominent victims of the planner syndrome so thoroughly skewered by Jane Jacobs.

But transit planners are still having a field day with the traditional staple of mass transportation, the bus. Today's urban buses are classic examples of what is known in the military procurement business as "gingerbreading": the piling on of adornments and complex mechanisms seemingly for no other reason than the sheer beauty, wonder, and technological fascination of it all. Even specialty features which have a clear function, such as hydraulic lifts for wheelchair-bound passengers, have been so cluttered with gimmickry that to operate them not uncommonly results in the mechanical failure of other components of the bus. Since 1977, most new buses purchased by cities have been what's known as "Advanced Design Transit Coaches," sleek, aerodynamic, faintly intimidating vehicles which look as though they have recently rolled out of a 1939 New York World's Fair artist's rendering of The City of the Future. In concept and reality, they represent nothing less than a massive scam on local governments and the taxpayers.

A single Advanced Design Transit Coach can sell for as much as $160,000. By contrast, a single full-sized school bus sells for about $25,000. Both are designed to carry a large number of passengers simultaneously from Point A to Point B. Where does the additional $135,000 go?

Mainly, it goes to fulfill the dreams and wishes of federal transit planners, who have virtually full control over the type of bus purchased by city governments. Back in the days when General Motors and its friends were taking over and converting trolley systems, the city governments made the decisions and there was at least a minimal incentive for GM to be cost-efficient and competitive. No such incentive presently exists, for the Urban Mass Transit Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation holds the business end of a stick from which dangles one of the most appealing carrots ever designed.

In the late 1960s and '70s — and unless the Reagan administration makes an unexpectedly abrupt policy reversal, this will hold true for the '80s — UMTA was in the business of making city governments offers they couldn't refuse. If a city wanted a new or renovated transit system, it could apply to UMTA for up to 80 percent of the needed

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funding. UMTA was happy to oblige — after all, modern urban mass transit is something people *ought* to have—and all it wanted from the cities was agreement that the new buses conform to the specifications written by UMTA.

UMTA's basic specifications are contained in what is informally called *The White Book*, a 200-page "guideline procurement document" (UMTA's modest phrase) plus 19 separate addenda. The level of detail to which this "guideline document" delves is typified by the following excerpt pertaining to seats:

> The upper rear portion of the seat back, seat back handhold, and upper rear surface of the modesty panels located immediately forward of the transverse seats shall be padded and/or constructed of energy absorbing materials. During the 10g deceleration of Section 2.3.2.3. the HIC number shall not exceed 400 for passengers ranging in size from a 6-year-old child through a 95th-percentile male.*

Not surprisingly, there are only three manufacturers of Advanced Design Transit Coaches in the United States: General Motors, Grumman (makers of Flxible coaches — that's right, there's no "e"), and Neoplan, a German company which is building a manufacturing plant in Colorado. These companies are barely affected by what individual passengers might or might not want in a bus, or by what the city governments might want, since UMTA subsidies mean UMTA specifications. But the companies care a great deal about what UMTA wants, and they spend a great deal of time thinking up new features for their buses and lobbying UMTA to incorporate them into the specifications. It was this procedure which resulted in the recent Grumman-Flxible debacle in New York City. Grumman had developed special lightweight bus frames and sold the concept to UMTA. The city bought over 600 new Flxibles, put them on the streets, and their frames promptly cracked. Grumman has now taken the extraordinary step of buying television ads, complete with actor Telly Savalas, to assure prospective passengers that its buses really are safe.

Incidents of massive equipment failure aside, however, city governments haven't much cared what kind of buses they get. With 80 percent of the price paid for by UMTA, cities can have a $160,000 Advanced Design Transit Coach for little more than they would pay for a school bus. UMTA's carrot-and-stick manipulation of the transit coach market virtually guarantees that huge, complex, expensive buses remain the only game in town. Smaller, cheaper, simpler buses do exist, of course; you see them at airports, hotels, and rent-a-car agencies. But UMTA so far has shown very little interest in these, and the cities, because of the availability of federal subsidies, have no incentive to investigate less expensive alternatives.

**For the curious, the term "HIC" in the specification refers to "Head Injury Criteria." UMTA's complete definition of HIC is as follows:*

$$\left[\frac{1}{t_1 - t_2}\int_{t_1}^{t_2} (a)dt\right]^{2.5} (t_2 - t_1)$$

where a = the resultant acceleration at the center of gravity of the head form expressed as a multiple of g, the acceleration of gravity. t_1 and t_2 = any two points in time during the impact."

In addition, one can't help but wonder why the size of adult males can be defined in percentiles, but all 6-year-old children are apparently of identical dimensions.

Fixed schedules, fixed routes

In conformance with Jane Jacobs's view of city planning, urban transit buses have been designed, built, and sold in accordance with what planners think people *ought* to ride in. Their view of what passengers ought to do doesn't stop with the selection of vehicles and equipment. Urban mass transit schedules and routes are equally reflective of someone else's vision of how human beings should behave in an orderly, rational way.

Urban transit routes and schedules are precisely fixed so that buses arrive and depart from particular places at particular times, day in and day out. This means, of course, that passengers must come to the buses, instead of the other way around. Planners compensate for this by selecting a variety of routes, each with its own time schedule, in an attempt to minimize the inconvenience to the largest possible number of potential passengers. This system works reasonably well at certain times of the day, when large numbers of people all happen to want to go in the same direction at roughly the same time. In most big cities, buses are packed with sitting and standing people during commuter rush hours, but rarely carry more than eight or ten passengers during midday or evening. More people do want to travel during rush hour than at other times, but this doesn't necessarily mean that they don't want to travel during non-rush hour periods. Many of them just don't want to travel by bus, because the fixed route and time schedule of the bus doesn't coincide with where they want to go in the time they want to spend to go there. Fixed routes and schedules make sense for crowded streets at rush hour, because most people's preference for getting to work on time is greater than their preference for going when they feel like it. But for non-rush hours, and for people who don't work standard shifts, precisely fixed bus routes and schedules tend to discourage bus riding and encourage such substitutes as private autos.

Recognizing this, some cities have experimented with "Dial-a-Ride" systems, usually unsuccessfully. With Dial-a-Ride, a passenger calls a central dispatcher who sends a small bus to pick him up and deliver him to a bus stop on a main transit route. But cities haven't charged enough for this service to come anywhere near covering the cost, and the sizable investment in a fleet of specialized vehicles, along with drivers and maintenance, has required too many dollars even for city governments to bear. Essentially, Dial-a-Ride systems have been clumsy, expensive, centralized imitations of private jitney systems which operate successfully in Latin America and to a limited degree in some cities of the United States. But with jitneys there is no central dispatching, high overhead, union scale wages for drivers, or heavy initial investment in equipment. Jitneys (jitney is a generic term which applies to privately owned and operated vehicles which carry passengers for a small fee) can be a viable means of mass transit for riders who are not attracted by large buses running fixed routes and fixed schedules.

Ironically, the closest thing to a large-scale jitney system in the United States operates right under the noses of UMTA's federal transit planners in Washington, D.C. The D.C. taxicab system is cheap, fast, and efficient—and is relatively unregulated. In other major cities, governments require taxi operators to purchase an operating permit from a carefully restricted supply; in New York City, for example, a taxi medallion costs $62,000. But in D.C., virtually anyone can

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A system of little private vehicles, careening around a city, taking people where and when they want to go? But that would be so . . . disorderly!

go into the taxi business merely by owning a car and conforming to a few minimum standards (it's not unusual to see a 1964 Plymouth cab idling next to a new Mercury cab). There are no meters on D.C. cabs, although maximum fares are set by the city according to the number of zones the cab travels through. It's not uncommon for a cab driver to stop and pick up a second or even a third passenger after picking up the first, upon determining that they are all heading in more or less the same direction; this happens so fast that no one ever seems to mind. A lengthy wait for a D.C. cab is rare, for there are over 20,000 of them in the city, and the fares, while higher than bus fares, seem not to deter lower-income people from using taxis.

It would not be at all strange in Washington to see a 1964 Plymouth taxi worth $400 carrying four passengers following behind a $160,000 Advanced Design Transit Coach carrying only three passengers. The reason for the taxi being full is the same as the reason for the bus being nearly empty: the taxi ride is more responsive to the preferences of the passengers. Yet if the cab driver sold his cab, bought a bus, and tried to pick up more passengers at standard taxi rates, he'd be put out of business immediately and possibly prosecuted.

If this cab driver weren't committing a criminal act, and if he weren't forced to compete with the city operated and subsidized bus system, he and thousands of others like him could probably make a comfortable living providing transportation with one of the many small buses now on the market. He could buy a small passenger van such as those built by General Motors, Dodge, or Ford, holding ten or twelve passengers. Or he could buy a larger vehicle such as the "Pioneer" manufactured by Superior Bus (other bus body manufacturers offer variations on the same design) which is nothing more complex than a steel bus body bolted onto the kind of truck chassis used for bread trucks, milk trucks, and parcel delivery vans. These buses will hold about 25 adults and allow room for standees. They're considerably narrower and shorter than large transit coaches, and their short wheelbases make them maneuverable on residential streets. They sell for about $20,000 to $30,000, depending on how they're equipped.

Just as Washington cab drivers can presently buy and equip a car, pay for fuel, repairs, and insurance out of the fares and tips, and take home what remains, an independent, "free market" bus driver could do exactly the same thing on a somewhat larger scale. He or she could finance the purchase of a new bus over a five-year period, costing perhaps $8,000 or $9,000 per year; fuel, maintenance, and insurance would add $10,000 annually; and he could decide to pay himself a salary of $20,000, which is near the top end of the present scale for bus drivers in major cities. Working a five-day week for 50 weeks a year, he could gross the needed $40,000 by carrying an average of 160 passengers per day at an average fare of $1.00.

One way he could reach this goal is to run his vehicle as a fixed fare, fixed route bus during rush hours, when he could carry a full load of passengers for a low fare. He could then operate as a flexible-route, sliding-fare taxi at other hours of the day, charging more for personalized service. A movable sign in a window at the front of the bus, such as those now used in transit coaches, would inform passengers whether he was operating as a bus or a taxi, and to what areas of the city he was willing to go. Conceivably, competition in the quality of service as well as in price could develop among private bus operators. Regular commuters might discover, for instance, that the blue-and-white bus on their route offers stereo music and free coffee at a higher fare than the yellow-and-green bus, which is no more than a rolling box with seats.

COURTESY GENERAL MOTORS

COURTESY SUPERIOR BUS MFG., LTD.

GM's Advanced Design Coach (l.) which costs up to $160,000, and one alternative, Superior's Pioneer, between $20,000 and $30,000.

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PAUL MYATT/WMATA

Modernistic rail systems like San Francisco's BART and Washington, D. C.'s Metrorail have failed to alleviate traffic congestion.

Transit and spontaneous order

If the scenario of thousands of little privately-operated buses zipping around city streets, merrily changing their mode of service from bus to taxi and back again, sounds a little speculative or even bizarre, its roots are far more closely grounded in reality than the visions of urban mass transit conjured up and imposed upon cities by planners. Such a system would likely work well in Washington, D.C. and other eastern cities, while more conventional jitney systems might be more appropriate for other kinds of cities — and even large transit coaches could be economically self-supporting in cities with large populations spread over huge geographical areas.

But today there is no opportunity to discover what mode of transit works best in any given city, for the planners have imposed on all cities massively expensive, monstrously inefficient transit systems whose single most distinguishing characteristic is their *lack of flexibility.* They have been conceived and constructed on the basis of what planners think people *ought* to do. People *ought* to leave their cars at home and ride around in brand new cushioned chrome-and-fiberglas behemoths. People *ought* to synchronize their daily schedules of time and place to fit a predetermined transit route. A system of private, cheap, simple, profit-making little vehicles careening around the city, taking people where they want to go when they want to get there? But that would be so . . . *so disorderly!*

But as observers such as Jane Jacobs — and economist Friedrich Hayek—realize, there's nothing at all "disorderly" about thousands and even millions of people simultaneously making their own choices of where, when, and how to travel, what form of transportation to buy, and from whom to buy it. Such a system is spontaneously, and profoundly, orderly. Transportation in cities is, or should be, a consumer product like bread, nails, and shoes; as with bread, nails, and shoes, consumers even now choose among a selection of available transportation alternatives to determine which best serves their wants and needs. But for urban mass transit, the choices have been severely restricted, and the "winner" in this limited marketplace thus far has been the private automobile, which offers to transportation consumers a degree of flexibility that transit planners have never even approached. Instead, the planners have, in Jacobs's phrase, "shrugged reality aside" and offered a rigid system which everyone is forced to buy but which few buy willingly. ❑

Chris Hocker is the publisher of *LR*.

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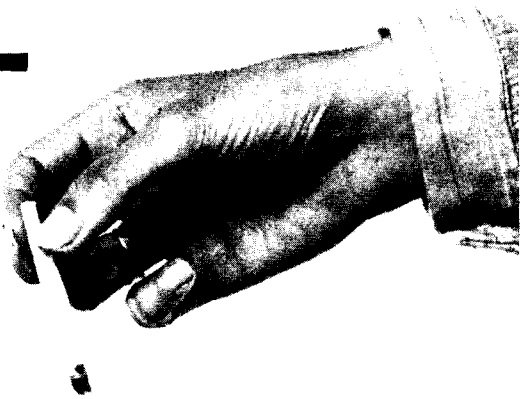
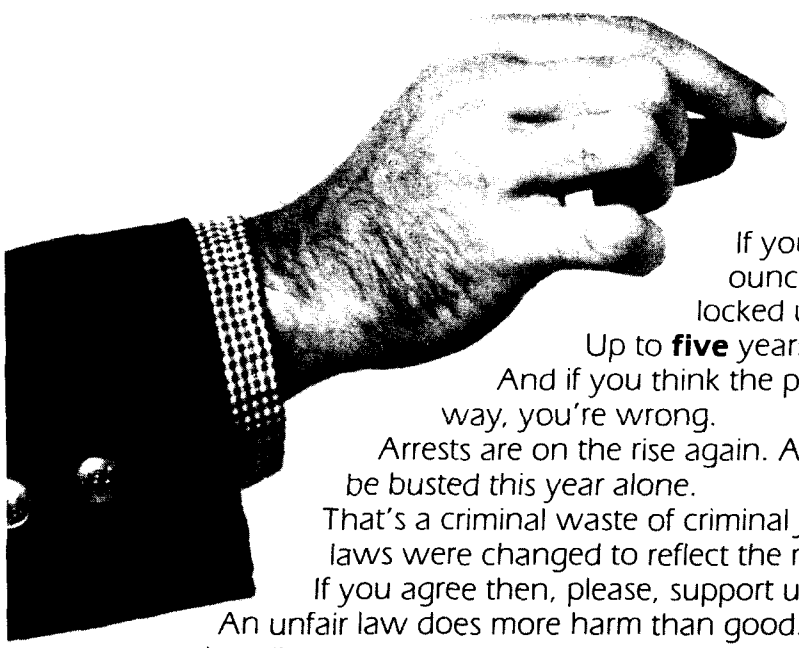
TAKE MARIJUANA OUT OF CRIMINAL HANDS





If you're caught with as little as an ounce of marijuana, you can still be locked up for a year in most states. Up to **five** years in others.

And if you think the police are looking the other way, you're wrong.

Arrests are on the rise again. Almost 500,000 Americans will *be busted this year alone.*

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An unfair law does more harm than good. And that does America no good at all.

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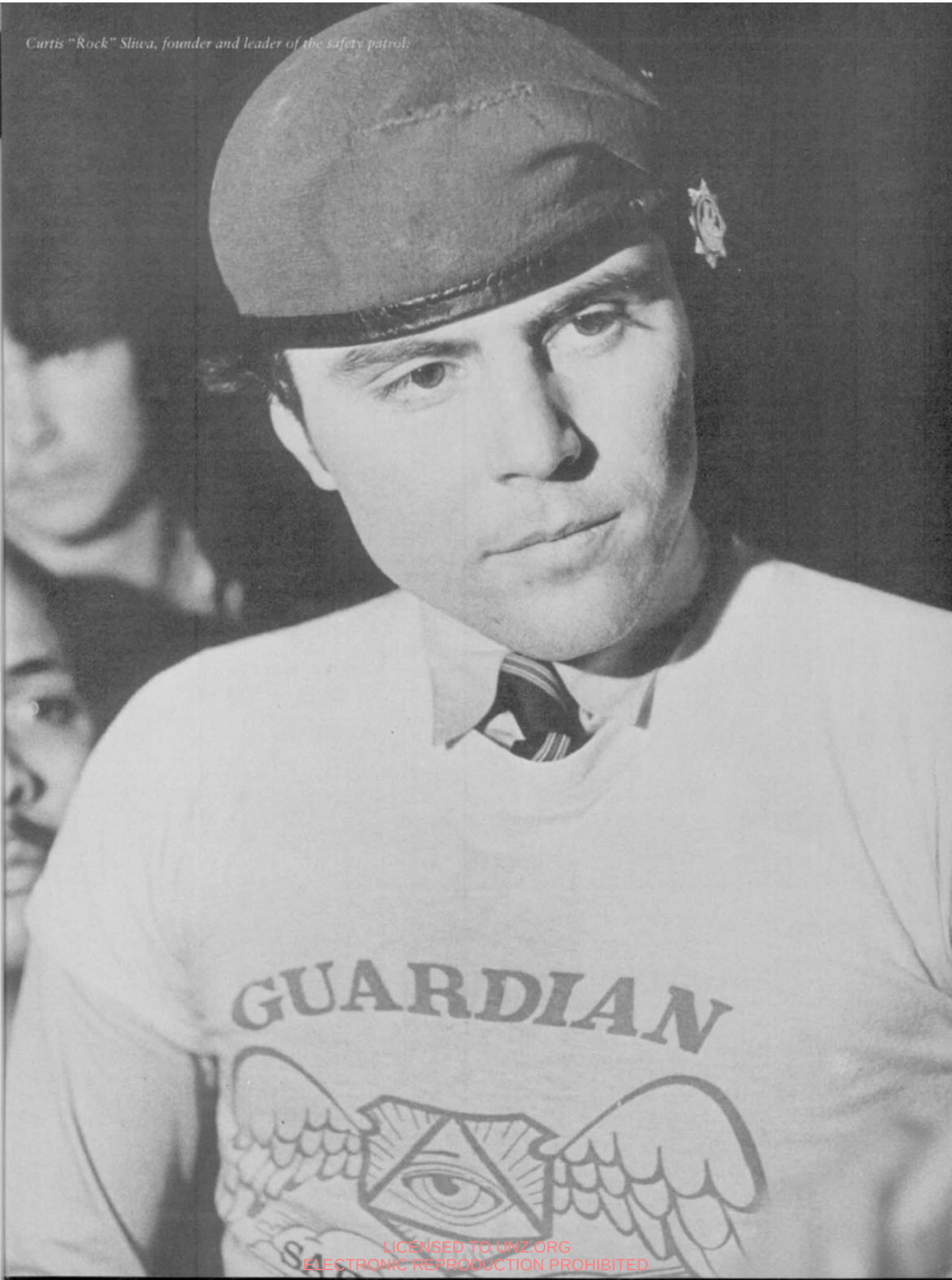

Curtis "Rock" Sliwa, founder and leader of the safety patrol.

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THE GUARDIAN ANGELS

An Interview with Curtis Sliwa

AN LR INTERVIEW

Their name sounds as if it was invented by Marvel Comics. Their ages are usually between 17 and 24. Their occupation—actually a hobby—is to keep the subways of New York free of "geeks" (slang for muggers, slashers, pickpockets, purse thieves, and other vermin). They're the Guardian Angels, and they're the hottest thing to hit New York City since disco.

Curtis "Rock" Sliwa started the group, just two and a half years ago, when it was the Magnificent 13 Subway Safety Patrol. The Angels are now 700 strong and growing.

The Guardian Angels' headquarters is located in Sliwa's own apartment in the Fordham University area of the Bronx. The walls are plastered with press clippings about the Angels and Sliwa, either doing a good deed or denouncing New York City officials for all the hassles that they have given the group. It is here that Sliwa granted an interview to *LR's* summer intern, Robert Capozzi.

The largish living room is lined with old, beaten-up furniture. Sliwa sits on one of the couches, alone, watching the 6 o'clock news. Other Angels are crowded onto the rest of the furniture in the room, giving Sliwa his "space." He gives a brusque "Hello" and focuses his attention back on the television, where a reporter is discussing the city subway system's lack of air conditioning. Sliwa sits calmly, angularly, with legs crossed, ankle on knee, and watches intensely. The telephone rings, and he snaps to attention and walks deliberately to the kitchen. The rest of the Angels, mostly young blacks and Hispanics, sit pensively.

Sliwa returns. "Julio, take your patrol to the D train and meet L Patrol at the platform at 34th Street," Sliwa barks in his Brooklyn accent. "Then patrol the park until 10:00. At that time, you are to report back to Headquarters."

Eight Angels, wearing their bright red berets and Guardian Angel Subway Safety Patrol T-shirts, exit quickly. No sooner does Sliwa sit down than the phone rings again. He swiftly stands and goes to answer it.

For the next three hours most of Sliwa's time is spent directing the endless flow of Angels on different patrols, or talking on the telephone, telling chapters in the other boroughs of New York where they should patrol that evening. The members of a visiting chapter from Philadelphia, easily distinguishable by their camouflage fatigue pants and heavy combat boots, float in and out of the steamy apartment to discuss different safety tactics with Rock. Sliwa's composure is remarkable through it all. He communicates effortlessly with minority Angels, though he himself is of Polish and Italian descent.

When he finally sits down to talk to *LR*, Sliwa makes it clear that he doesn't want to discuss politics or be associated with any political group. It is apparent that he has been interviewed before. He looks at you straight, talks to you straight, and leaves you with the impression that he is a man in command.

When the interview is over, Sliwa instructs another patrol to escort *LR's* reporter through the subways of New York. When they patrol, they travel in single file, not quite marching, attracting attention wherever they go. Particularly receptive are the senior citizens that they pass, who greet the sight of the Angels with, "You're doing a great job."

On patrol, the Angels are disciplined, almost to the point of being subway scientists. When a train approaches, the patrol leader yells, "Spread out!" Each Angel takes one subway car, enters it, and stands attentively until the train comes to the next stop. Then each goes to the automatic doors and, in a crouched position, looks down the platform to see if a fellow Angel is in need. If one is, he or she will waive the red beret as a signal.

One Angel described to *LR* why he became a Guardian Angel. "You get respect, that's why," he said. "This city is so big and so bad that you don't mean nothing to no one. But if you're an Angel, you're somebody, and at the same time you're helping the City." The public seems to agree. As one young subway rider put it when the Angels were at the

Cities DEAD OR ALIVE?

ANDREW POPPER/PICTURE GROUP

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Yankee Stadium subway platform at 155th Street, "You got to admit that they're legit."

LR: How many active Guardian Angels are there?

Sliwa: There's 700 in New York City, and there's 400 others outside of New York City.

LR: Where are those affiliates located?

Sliwa: There are nine operational chapters—where there are actual patrols—and six chapters in the training phase. The chapters where there are actual patrols are in Los Angeles; Atlanta; Philadelphia; Stamford, Connecticut; Jersey City; Hoboken; Newark; Elizabeth; and Trenton. The six chapters in formation — in training — are Boston; Miami; San Francisco; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Cleveland, Ohio; and New Orleans.

LR: What happened when the Angels went down to Atlanta?

Sliwa: Four months ago, right in the midst of the hot and heavy killings of young black children in Atlanta, the Guardian Angels decided amongst ourselves that we would send a delegation to Atlanta. Not to catch the killer, as many other people had tried to do: swamis, mystics, like a three-ring circus—that, I might add, the city officials of Atlanta had *paid* for to come and put them up.

But the Guardian Angels said we were going down there to organize young people in those black housing projects where young blacks were disappearing, to patrol their area. Looking out for their fellow youngsters, getting parents aware of watching their kids (which is *totally* nonexistent down there; there are no block watch programs). In a city of two million, with a public safety commission headed by Lee Brown, with a fund of millions, there are only 200 volunteers actively working in Atlanta. That's why the killings have continued.

The Guardian Angels went down there, didn't ask a penny from anyone, didn't cost the city anything, didn't cost the state of Georgia anything. And we were met by official resistance, from the mayor, Maynard Jackson, and the Public Safety Director, Lee Brown, who said how critical it was of us to think we could down to Atlanta and help the situation. There are no subways in Atlanta! We weren't needed; we weren't wanted; no one asked us—they wanted us to get the hell out.

But, although the 11 Guardian Angels who went down to Atlanta had no money, no place to stay, no way of getting around; when we arrived, people were there to meet us at the train station, provided us with a place to stay, with a van, gasoline, a headquarters, a telephone, food to eat while we were there. The Atlanta Guardian Angels, the 11 who came from New York, had *more* facilities, had more things available to them, than the chapter right here in New York that has existed for two and a half years.

Now the situation in Atlanta is this—the 11 Guardian Angels have returned, and we have a chapter in Atlanta of approximately 18 individuals that are on patrol in those housing projects, organizing young people into block watch programs to keep an eye on the kids.

LR: What do you think of other organizations which model themselves after you?

Sliwa: Well, nothing's been brought to my attention.

LR: I know of a group in Washington, D.C., which is called the Young Dillingers.

ANDREW POPPER PICTURE GROUP

A Guardian Angel holding the beret used to signal for help.

Sliwa: Oh, yeah. I got a call from them. I'm kind of suspicious of that group. The director of the program called me up, asking for information on tax exempt status, how I formed the Guardian Angels, and all that — and then I started questioning him on the Young Dillingers. I said, "My God, why did you pick a name like the Young Dillingers? Thats a name for outlaws! Dillinger's a hero to *criminals*."

Well, these are all ex-gang guys, and dudes who've been busted for serious crime.

I view those kinds of programs as poverty pimp programs. Generally people develop these programs hoping to be able to attract federal, state, or city financing of the program. Particularly when dealing with the very poor areas and the individuals who have criminal records, they are trying to use it as a reclamation-type program. They're just trying to get seed money. I don't play that ball game.

LR: How come you *don't* play that ball game? I've seen in the press that you don't want to take any money from the city, you don't want to get involved with the Transit Authority, and so on. Why is that?

Sliwa: That has been an ongoing battle that has existed for two and a half years, even since the inception of the group as the Magnificent 13 Subway Safety Patrol, on February 13, 1979. Initially, it was greeted in a very hostile manner by the Mayor's office, and also by the Transit Police Commissioner. And they've been negative ever since—except last Friday, June the first. The city, after two and a half years of trying to discredit the organization and dissuade public opinion from supporting the group, after several months of negotiations, *finally* recognized the Guardian Angels officially, decreed that we are an independent and autonomous organization and *not* an extension of the police department. They adopted a code for the police department, in which the Police Commissioner addressed the members of the department, directing them to fully cooperate with the Guardian Angels. In return for that, the Angels would submit their names for record checks and identification cards—we would let the police know in advance who we were, what we were doing, where we were going, and how we were doing it. They would supply us with training in the Penal Code and the right of citizen's arrests. Understand that this is the only police department in the United States that will

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now be training citizens to make citizen's arrests.

LR: So you think that this is a positive move.

Sliwa: Oh, I think if you look at the overall effects of the agreement, it gives hope to any citizen out there who feels pressured by the bureaucratic red tape and political inefficiency — through the fact that if you form an organization and the people in the group are dedicated to the self-help principle of pulling yourself up by the bootstraps, sticking through it, thick and thin, and eventually succeeding, winning out, that the benefits of that struggle will be seen in the fact that you can maintain your independence, be able to deal with problem areas without constantly being imbued in political red tape. Previous to this, the analogy has always been that unless you cooperate with the government, and you give in and let yourself be coopted through federal funding, state or city funding, and allow the government to oversee your procedures, then you will be destroyed — because you will have a lack of people power, a lack of emotion involved in it, and a lack of money.

LR: Why don't you accept government money? What kinds of strings would they put on you if you were to accept it?

Sliwa: Well, number one, the government has a history of getting involved in local community-organization-type programs. Coming in with reams of paperwork, reams of administrative detail, and, in essence, a patronage system, which is the pipeline of politics. One must understand that jobs in the realm of politics are created as a vehicle of patronage, to ensure the electoral process and the continuation of those that are in power. You give a person a job; you prescribe to them that on Election Day they go out and hand out leaflets to get people to vote for candidates of that party, and they get the job. That's an age old tradition, not just in the United States, but in certain Western European countries. Accept that. Don't try to counteract it. Understand that it exists. But, since we consider ourselves a self-help role model—one that is pure of those types of infringements and one that has proven its ability to operate outside of all those entanglements—we're not going to be one to suddenly toss in the towel and say, "We'll take the easy road out."

We do not want a program where we are located in midtown Manhattan, in a skyscraper office on the 98th floor, with 50 secretaries madly typing paperwork, and with two Guardian Angels (who *are* the patrol, the entire patrol) who are patrolling the lobby of that building with two $10,000 walkie-talkie units. That's not what we want the Guardian Angels to become.

LR: How do you do all of this financially?

Sliwa: Six months ago, the federal government recognized the activities of the Guardian Angels. It was a strange turn of events, when you consider that the city bureaucracy and the city police were very hostile to the idea. Even though we didn't have a patrol in the center of government — Washington, D.C.—and most congressmen and most political officials in the federal government have never experienced a Guardian Angel patrol, the IRS saw fit to recognize our activities and grant us our non-profit, tax-exempt status.

Our feeling is that we don't want to accept a penny from the state, city, or federal goverment — although we can, through our charter. We aren't seeking it; we don't want it; if they gave it to us tomorrow, we'd ship it back.

But individuals have contributed to us from time to time when we had a particular need. When we first started the group, I was a manager at McDonald's. Each and every Guardian Angel is fully responsible for his or her own personal expenses — the cost of the shirt, the cost of the beret, the cost to ride the bloody subway round and round. Sixty cents, just to protect the rights of people and their property; you still got to pay sixty cents to go on the Coney Island joyride that we call our subway system. Believe me, it's no joy to be out there.

God forbid you were injured while on patrol. You're fully responsible for your own medical expenses. You have to incur *all* the expenses — time, clothing, food. It's very time consuming, and, naturally, it's expensive also. That's the self-help motto of the group.

But there are expenses in running a national organization, where you have to communicate with 15 different chapters which each have different needs and are at different stages of development. So we are very dependent on the generosity of the public to pay for our $1000-a-month phone bill. Our rent here ($200), and all of the other necessities just to keep it afloat—which previous to this were negligible, and I was able to finance out of my own personal savings.

I'm not working now, because I have to operate this 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Not because I'm forced to, but because I want to. But it also needs to be done.

LR: How do you feel about Mayor Koch and the other city officials? Do you think that they resent you, and indeed, that they want to obstruct you and the Guardian Angels and what you're doing? Might it be that you'll make them look bad?

Sliwa: I think that, number one, now that they are officially tied to us through that agreement, they really have no choice. They made their bed, and they have to sleep in it.

LR: How about prior to the agreement?

Sliwa: They were doing everything that they could possibly do to discredit us and knock us out of the ball park. They were hot and heavy to totally eliminate the Guardian Angels, if at all possible. At this particular point, even though there's an agreement, they're very uncomfortable with us, there's no doubt about that. But they acceded to public pressure.

Public opinion polls have indicated that 75 percent to 80 percent of the public at large favored the Angels, and were opposed, at that time, to the officials' negative reaction toward the Angels. For 11 days, two months ago, we collected signed petitions totalling 185,000. Some organizations can't accumulate 185,000 in a lifetime; the only reason we didn't accumulate more is, we ran out of paper. All a Guardian Angel had to do was stand on a corner with a petition, and a line would form. The public responded by giving us an overwhelming signal of support, which signalled the politicians that, "Hey, it was an unwise and unpopular move to denounce the Angels," and forced them to come to that agreement with us.

They're not comfortable with us. I don't think that they'd invite us home to the wife and kids. They're suspicious.

LR: On that note, it has been reported in the press that you were abducted by some transit cops and threatened. Is that true?

Sliwa: That's still under investigation by the District Attorney. What happened was, three gentlemen that night

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"We don't stop people from smoking, drinking, playing loud radios. We're purely a safety patrol."

picked me up in a car, alleging that one of my members had been injured while on patrol at about 6:30 that night. I got into the car, as I've done on other occasions, and just assumed that they were taking me to the hospital. Instead of taking me there, they just continued to drive me out to Long Island, and we eventually ended up on Jones Beach. We pulled into a parking lot, where we had a conversation which, I would say, lasted at least a hour, in which overt threats were made to me. It was indicated to me that they were aware of the movements of my family on an hour-to-hour basis. They proved that to me, by relating to me, hour-to-hour, where I had been the last two days; where my dad, mom, and two sisters had been. There were only three of them in the car, and so there was no physical way that they could have covered all five of us. So I knew they weren't joking around.

LR: What does that say to you about the police and their relationship with the Guardian Angels? Do they really see you as a threat?

Sliwa: I don't know if it's so much the average cop. I have to believe that a cop down in the subway, stuck there by himself with nothing but a gun, a nightstick, and a walkie-talkie, is very happy to see a Guardian Angel patrol. If that police officer was ever in need, the Guardian Angels would be there to protect that officer, as well as civilians.

We've done that on two occasions. In fact, it's been reported that we've saved the lives of two transit police officers in the line of duty. (They have at times objected to the use of the strong words, "saved the officers' lives," but they have indicated that we were there to help an officer in a sticky situation.) So I think that the value of the patrol has already been proved, tenfold over. I would think that the average cop knows that we're the only people he can depend on — other than cops — down there in the time of need.

But the union, which represents the cops' interest, has convinced its membership that the Guardian Angels are a vital threat to the future hiring of police — potential layoffs, potential welfare systems, sending the kids to college, the whole bit — so that no longer does the cop look at the potential good of the Angel patrols in terms of the individual help that can be offered to him, but as a possible (number one) taking of a job, stealing of the limelight. Because, let's face it, the Angels walk through and people applaud, clap, pat them on the back — and the cop is standing there, and all they do to the cop is yell and scream.

We're not saying that we're cops. We're not saying that we're trying to be cops. We don't serve the same function. We don't do one-tenth of the things a cop has to do: we don't give violations; we don't stop people from smoking, drinking, playing loud radios. We are purely a safety patrol, and we are there to protect the right of citizens and their personal property, but we can overlook a hell of a lot of things that a cop can't — the selling of drugs, the taking of drugs, pimping, prostituting. The cop is the only visible extension of authority, that emanates right from the Mayor's house. So, you can't yell at the Mayor; you can't yell at the City Councilperson; you can't yell at the judges, the Governor, or the other politicians — but you can get at the cop, because he is the official representative of City Hall.

LR: To play Devil's advocate for a minute, a lot of the city officials claim that — one — you're a vigilante group and you're dangerous and a lot of your members are in fact ex-criminals, and — two — from their experience with the group of Chassidic Jews down in Brooklyn that got together and attacked innocent people, that self-help organizations are inherently dangerous. How do you make sure that the Guardian Angels don't fullfill these claims?

Sliwa: Well, number one, even though the Mayor of New York about a year ago called us vigilantes (that's probably the one name that comes to mind), even *he* could never show to the public one time where the Guardian Angels have committed a vigilante act.

Number two, in terms of the methods of the Angels and the fact that they might have had criminal records. The first members of the chapter had no records at all. Changing our name from the Magnificent 13 Subway Patrol to the Guardian Angels meant changing policy in three ways. It meant going from three-person patrols to eight-person patrols, with a leader and a secondary leader of each patrol; it meant that no longer were we just going on the subways — we extended our patrols to the parks, streets, senior citizen areas, everywhere and anywhere; and it meant that we were now accepting people who had minor brushes with the law. We do not accept people who have convictions for arson, child abuse, sexual abuse, weapons possession, armed robbery, armed assault, attempted homicide, sale or possession of heroin or cocaine, or burglary with burglar tools. Those are the kinds of crimes for which we will never accept a person. But if the group were only to exist as a conduit for those people who had never had problems with the law, then all we would be establishing, in most communities, is that the goody-goodies become the Guardian Angels and those who've had brushes with the law are left to the functions that most young people have, and that is, destructive violence, or just behavior which doesn't achieve anything.

LR: So it's almost a recovery program for basically good kids who might have done something in their past?

Sliwa: Not so much a recovery program, because the great majority of the Guardian Angels have *not* had brushes with the law. What we're talking about is that in the course of a young person's activity, a young person's hanging out socializing, from time to time, they run across trouble. Then, being involved in a positive affirmation of people's personal rights and private property reasserts the value of community service to one another. It's obviously a much more constructive phase of activity than just standing on the corner sipping from a quart of beer and toking on a joint. What would you rather have that young person doing?

LR: What training does a Guardian Angel have to go through?

Sliwa: First of all, you have to be recommended by someone who's already a Guardian Angel. That Guardian Angel, he or she, is putting his or her shirt and beret on the line for that other person, and if in the course of the inter-

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view or training, we feel that the person had no business being brought in, we will strip the colors of the person who recommended that person. So, naturally, you're not going to be bringing in just any Tom, Dick, or Harry.

You have to be physically tested. Then there is training in the Penal Code, and in the right of a citizen to make a citizen's arrest. Now, as of our agreement with the City, and in other chapters around the country, you must be certified in first aid. And you have to have gone through incident-related training, where, either in a park or a secluded part of a train, you are trained in virtually every problem that could possibly exist, from a husband fighting with a wife, to a scene of vandalism, graffiti, attempted robbery — every conceivable problem, and how it is as a Guardian Angel you deal with it. From the public's point-of-view, the policeman's point-of-view, the complainant's point-of-view, the victim's point-of-view, the witness's point-of-view. And correlate the total picture.

LR: What gave you the idea of the Magnificent 13?

Sliwa: It wasn't really an idea; it was just having been involved in volunteer service since the age of 14. I was involved in recycling garbage. At a very young age, awards had been given to me by various public officials—President Nixon, Governor Nelson Rockefeller, then-Mayor John Lindsay. It was an encouragement to get involved in greater areas of volunteer service. The largest area of need, obviously, in our urban areas today is the area of crime. So, my main obligation, I felt, was to develop a volunteer program that helped to deal with the crime that was just proliferating across the city.

LR: Sounds like you really go for the slogan, "I Love New York." You sound like a real believer in this city.

Sliwa: Well, more than that. It's a *people* program. Because if it was just a New York program, I wouldn't have bothered to expand it to different cities. What it is, is an epidemic has really engulfed the country, both in the urban areas and the surburban and rural areas. And that's the indifference of people toward other people—the insensitivity, and the falling away of a time and age when people just normally came to the aid of one another.

LR: Do you see other services which have traditionally been recognized as government services provided by similar private organizations? Do you see that as a viable alternative?

Sliwa: I'd say it even stronger than that. I'm saying that our political system has failed in many ways. Now I'm *not* saying, "Replace it with another political system." What I'm saying is that people have to begin assuming more of the responsibility of their daily lives themselves—as long as it is righteous, lawful, and correct. I'm not saying that people should go out there and start arresting people and trying them, or building subway cars, or beginning different forms of mass transit. But areas that are within human needs—for instance, there's a pile of shit in front of your house. Instead of breaking your finger dialing all the numbers downtown to get the sanitation department to clean it up, go out there with a shovel and broom and clean it up! If there's paint that's needed in your apartment and the landlord isn't giving it to you, well then, go out and get paint—and then bill your landlord. Do a lot of the self-help things needed, in order to create a better environment in which to live — and then worry about who's to blame afterward. Don't point the finger first and expect the thing to get done.

LR: So what you've done through the Guardian Angels is tap into a spontaneous community desire, people wanting to defend themselves.

Sliwa: More so than that. That's a very good premise, and the thing which you see first off. But it goes much deeper than that. What it is, is utilizing young people who are causing the problems—we're not talking about the people who become Guardian Angels, but *young people in general* are the ones causing the problems. Ninety percent of the violent crimes in America are committed by those under the age of 20.

ANDREW POPPER/PICTURE GROUP

Miguel Paredes, 19, with the leather shoulder pouch many of the Angels use to carry valuables.

Let's just take New York City. Our group is predominantly Hispanic and black. You ask an average outsider who doesn't live in New York City who the criminals are, and he'll say, young blacks and young Hispanics. The idea of blacks and Hispanics is negative—trouble makers, Riker's Island, the worst dregs of society. What the Guardian Angels have proved is that the minorities in New York City, those that live in the worst crime-infested areas, have actually picked up the ball *first* and attacked the problem from a self-help point-of-view, without asking for any government help whatsoever. So now we're giving pride to any ethnic group or any minority group or any oppressed group, showing them, "Yes you *can* make a contribution and not just always be the receptor, or the third or fourth. You can actually be the *pioneers* of that movement." ❑

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CRIME IN THE CITIES

The Drug Connection

ROY A. CHILDS, JR.

Bring up the subject of our nation's cities today, and the subject of crime is likely to lurk just beneath the surface. The perception is growing that our cities are becoming cesspools of violence, and statistics would seem to bear this perception out. While no region of America has been crime free, the majority of crimes in this country seem to be concentrated in our urban centers. Rural areas accounted for only 730,000 crimes out of an estimated total of 12,153,000 crimes reported nationwide during 1979 — a mere 6 percent of the total. The closer we get to our cities, the more likely we are to experience some sort of crime. And when we step into a ghetto area, it seems to surround us.

How much has crime increased in the past few years? According to the FBI Uniform Crime Report, between 1970 and 1979 violent crime had increased by 37 percent; motor vehicle theft, by 15 percent; murder and non-negligent manslaughter, by 25 percent; aggravated assault, by 45 percent. In the category of so-called property crimes, there has been an increase of 33 percent since 1970: robbery is up 25 percent; burglary, up 33 percent; and larceny, up 36 percent. That's just reported crimes, which understate the true incidence by a factor of 2 to 5. A *Newsweek* poll conducted by George Gallup reported that 20 percent of those surveyed had their property vandalized within the last year, 21 percent had money or property stolen, and 14 percent had their homes broken into. If a man's home is his castle, there are millions of castles under seige in America today.

And if commentators are to be believed, everything from high unemployment to hot weather, inflation, and low police morale is to be blamed. But if one factor has been singled out more than anything else, it is drugs, particularly heroin.

The assertions are everywhere. Last April, Presidential Counsellor Edwin Meese III said in a speech before the Prosecutor's Management Information System Group in Washington, D.C. that a number one priority would be to increase the cooperation of federal, state, and local governments in the war against "dangerous drugs," which are a major source of crime. And, last May, in his opening remarks to the Law Enforcement Executives Narcotics Committee, outgoing Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Peter Bensinger stated that "violent crime and drug trafficking are inextricably connected. The underlying cause of this violent crime can be traced to the enormous sums of money that accompany the buying and selling of illegal drugs."

Nor are federal government officials like Meese and Bensinger alone. Stories in newspapers all across the country have been linking heroin use to crime for the better part of the past two decades. In 1978, *The New York Times* ran six feature stories in a series entitled "The War on 138th Street," with such scary subheads as "A Struggle for South Bronx Drug Empire: 27 Murders, Voodoo, 'Contracts' on Police," detailing the warfare — open shootings, assaults, threats, blackmail, and contracts put out on police—between gangs wrestling for control of a $30 million-a-year heroin operation. Similar stories have found their way into the *Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Examiner,* and other papers in Boston, Florida, Texas, Philadelphia, and Detroit.

When, in August 1980, *The Washington Post* reported a 20 percent increase in crime in the District of Columbia in just one year, drugs were seen by a police official as the chief culprit. "An increased availability of heroin on the streets is producing 'a new batch of heroin addicts' who are committing larcenies, robberies, and burglaries to support their habits, said Assistant Chief Maurice Turner, head of field operations." (August 7, 1980) He was echoing received opinion. Less than a year later, Turner was named Chief of Police, vowing a war against heroin. "When the communities of Washington are free from the menace of narcotics users," he told the *Washington Star* after his designation, "there will be a large reduction in the number of burglaries, robberies,

COURTESY DEA

cities DEAD OR ALIVE?

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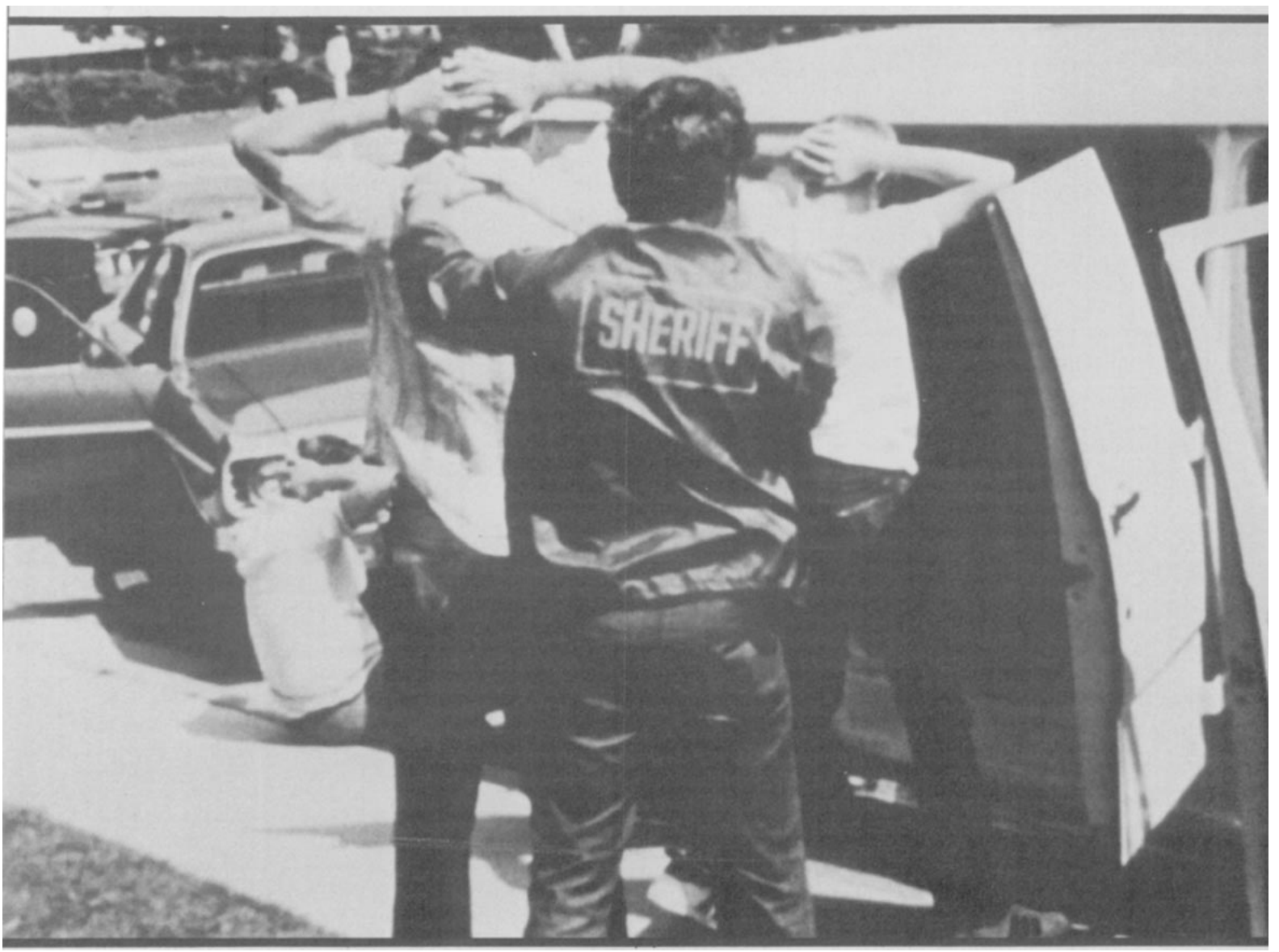
and thefts."

Why is there such a relationship between heroin and crime? Chief Turner, like nearly everyone else in the law enforcement and drug abuse business, thinks the reason is the price of maintaining a daily habit. As he put it in an interview with *LR*'s Lee Williams, "If you see an addict going through withdrawal, he's in some kind of damn pain. . . . When they get pretty well strung out, they have about a $100 to $120-a-day habit. When they get that type of habit, they're going to have to steal approximately six times that much to sell on the open market. They're going to have to steal about $600 [worth of fenceable goods] to support a $100-a-day habit."



Thousands of people are arrested every year for trafficking in heroin, with little effect on drug use or crime. In fact, a Detroit study showed that drug seizures lead only to higher heroin prices and to an increase in the crime rate.

The studies

The endless studies done of heroin and crime seem to bear him out. A study by the DEA found,

> It is estimated that heroin users committed $3.9 billion worth of property crime in 1974. This represents about 19% of all property crime in the United States. It should be realized that this estimate represents a sizeable amount of property crime. According to this cost figure, heroin users commit over 100,000 robberies, burglaries, larcenies, or auto thefts each day plus an undetermined amount of crime involving bad checks and credit cards. This results in a cost to society of over ten million dollars per day. Additionally addicts engage in an immeasurable amount of illicit drug sales.

Other studies in turn seem to confirm these sorts of estimates. A study done by John C. Ball, Lawrence Rosen, John A. Flueck, and David N. Nurco, of Temple University and the University of Maryland School of Medicine—funded by a grant from the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) — found that the 243 addicts interviewed committed 473,738 crimes over an 11-year period. The range in crime per addict was from a low of no crimes for 6 subjects to a high of 9450 crimes for one particularly enterprising thief. Another study, by James A. Inciardi and C. D. Chambers, "found that 26 addicts on the street were responsible on a daily basis for 22 major crimes." In a more recent study, Inciardi found (using a group in Miami) that 239 active male heroin users committed 80,644 offenses during a 12-month period—an average of 337 crimes each.

Before accepting these estimates as accurate, however, we

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should reflect for a moment. There is no agreement among different government agencies about the basic facts that are alleged. To understand the difficulty in analyzing statistics, consider the claim of the DEA that "heroin users commit over 100,000 robberies, burglaries, larcenies, or auto thefts each day." This would amount to 36,500,000 crimes a year in these categories. But according to the FBI Uniform Crime Report for 1979, there were only 11,441,100 such crimes committed. Even if we include the Bureau of Justice Statistics' estimate of unreported crimes, obtained through extensive surveys, this figure is only approximately doubled, to 23,000,000 crimes. In short, according to the DEA, heroin users alone commit 13,000,000 more crimes in these categories than are committed by *everyone* in the United States. The figures don't add up.

It isn't just the DEA's figures that don't add up. Local law enforcement officials' estimates for the number of crimes committed by addicts are well beyond—often by a factor of 10 to 20 — the best estimates of the numbers of crimes reported or estimated. The scare stories make good reading —how many times a year do various government agencies report "the biggest drug bust in history?" But each time they do, the public seems to swallow it whole. No one seems to question the basic underlying plot any longer, so taken for granted are the myths, scare stories, government proclamations, and, frankly, lies.

The facts and the scenario

The scenario has always taken this form: We are facing a problem of drug abuse of unparalleled proportions; a whole criminal subculture has developed which is using, and is addicted to, dangerous drugs — especially heroin; being a heroin addict is like being a slave to impulse, and among these impulses is the desperate urge to do anything to get the drug, particularly to commit crimes. And, in increasing numbers, the addicts are dying of heroin overdoses. Our law enforcement and medical drug abuse officials are concerned that the problem is out of hand; what is needed is a coordinated effort to bring it under control. This involves coordinating the efforts of local, state, and national law enforcement officials, together with those of the State Department and the Bureau of Customs, to help stem the flow of drug traffic into the United States from foreign countries, to arrest large traffickers, bust small pushers, and get the poor, hapless, zombie-like addict into a "treatment center," where, with help from medical personnel and therapists, he or she can be treated for the sickness, and returned to normal life as a productive, noncriminal member of society. Then crimes will diminish, and once again it will be safe to walk the streets. The study by Ball et al. concludes that "a major means of reducing the amount of crime committed by opiate addicts is within sight. If we can control addiction, it is evident that we will reduce criminality appreciably."

The assumption behind this scenario is that this *can* be done and that it *should* be done. *The problem with the scenario is that none of its basic assumptions is true.*

Consider the very definition of the problem to be solved. We read, in a widely-respected pharmacology text, Goodman and Gilman's *The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics,* the following definition of the term "drug abuse": "*Drug abuse* refers to the use, usually by self-administration, of any drug in a manner that deviates from the approved medical or social patterns within a given culture. The term conveys the notion of social disapproval, and it is not necessarily descriptive of any particular pattern of drug use or its potential adverse consequences." In short, "drug abuse" is *defined* not by any pattern of drug use, or by any given effect of a drug, but by the fact that it is disapproved of. The whole area of drug abuse has not been treated as a scientific matter, but as a quasi-religious one.

The time has come for a rational look at heroin and its relationship to crime, and at our national policies of obstructing commerce, arresting traders in drugs, and mandating compulsory treatment. Let us look at these step by step, using commonly accepted assumptions as the basis for our reasoning.

Some facts and assumptions

At the source of the whole question of drug abuse, in the case of heroin, lies the poppy, a plant which can be grown almost anywhere. Opium, for thousands of years the most popular narcotic, is the dried juice of the poppy. The chief active ingredient in opium is morphine, present in a concentration of about 10 percent. Heroin is morphine heated in the presence of acetic acid (found in vinegar) and is, when consumed, promptly converted back into morphine in the body. Thus, all three opiates—opium, morphine, and heroin — are essentially identical, differing mainly in strength of effect per unit dose. The first recorded use of opium was in 5000 B.C. by the Sumerians; morphine was isolated less than two hundred years ago; and heroin was first synthesized in Germany in 1898. All can be smoked, sniffed, taken orally, or injected. The main difference felt from injecting opiates rather than taking them by other means is the sensation of a several-seconds-long "rush" after an injection, which is described as a flush of warmth to the pit of the stomach. We shall later consider the actual effects and side-effects of the opiates; right now, let us consider how these drugs relate to the commission of crime.

The facts are that some people like these drugs and use them, while others don't like these drugs and don't want other people to use them. Informed and uninformed people are to be found in both camps. But today, those who oppose the use of the drug constitute a majority and have passed prohibition laws banning the cultivation, production, importation, sale, and use of the opiates.

From that point on, there are problems of numbers and statistics and studies. According to the NIDA, for example, there are 420,000 heroin users in the United States, while according to the DEA, there are closer to 556,000. Estimates of the number of property crimes committed by "addicts" range from a low of 20 percent to a high of 70 percent. Estimates of the number of heroin users who are true "addicts" differ too, from a low of 20 percent to a high of 75 percent. And the estimate of the number of heroin addicts who support their $100 or so per day habits by property crime ranges from a low of 25 percent (DEA) to a high of 80 percent (local law enforcement agencies). So how many heroin users are there in the United States? The most commonly accepted estimate is the NIDA's of 420,000. Of this number, the DEA estimates that something over 100,000 are heavy users or addicts, while the rest range from light, occasional use — "chippers," who do not seem to become addicted, to medium level use — those going on and off the drug, classified variously as hardcore addicts or as light, infrequent users.

The best estimate of the total average dose is 40 to 50 mg per day. The average cost of this per day seems to be around

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$100. According to the DEA, which has a tendency to inflate the problem by inflating the statistics,

> Most heroin related property crime is committed by less than one-quarter of the heroin user population.... Only the large habit addicts fit into any common stereotype of a heroin user with a strong dependence upon crime. They would appear to be unable to support their addiction without committing theft or selling drugs.

Let us postulate that an estimated 30 to 40 percent of the property crimes in the United States are committed annually by heroin users to maintain their habits. This represents a midpoint between the low estimates of 10 percent and the high estimates of 70 percent, to be used solely for the purpose of allowing us to make some important calculations.

Supply-side prohibition

The fundamental approach of the drug prohibitionists has been to attempt to stop the importation of heroin from other countries. To achieve this end, the Bureau of Customs works hand-in-hand with the State Department. The U.S. has entered into a myriad of treaties with foreign governments — Mexico, Turkey, France, and the like — to destroy the traffic in opiates by destroying the poppy fields where they exist, by closing foreign processing plants, or simply by buying the drugs as they are produced to stop them from reaching the international black market. International law enforcement officials cooperate to identify and arrest major drug dealers. The Bureau of Customs attempts to seize any opiates entering the United States. And local law enforcement officials attempt to identify pushers and users to arrest them, thus stopping the cycle of heroin availability and crime.

So far, none of these measures has worked.

When one nation succeeds in shutting down local poppy growers or opium producers, other suppliers pop up, because of the enormous profitability of the drugs. Like marijuana growers in the United States, growers are readily able to hide crops from authorities and sell them to black marketeers. When the U.S. government made strides toward shutting down the production and shipment of heroin through the Middle East and Europe (especially France), new supply routes were established from Latin America and Southeast Asia. In short, despite billions of dollars spent to curb this aspect of the supply side of heroin marketing, all that has been accomplished has been to shift the source of supply.

Can we stop heroin from being imported into the United States? Consider the numbers. Even if we estimate that those 420,000 users all consume heroin at an average rate of 40 to 50 mg per day, the total supply of heroin which would have to reach the United States to supply the entire heroin-using population for a year would be a maximum of 6 to 8 tons. What is the likelihood that this can be stopped? The total amount of all imports of all kinds that come to the United States each year by plane or vessel — omitting goods imported in trucks and automobiles — is nearly *500 million tons*. Thus, to cut off the smuggling of heroin would require that we somehow find that 6 to 8 tons in a haystack of half-a-billion tons. Even if we supposed that total consumption in the U.S. were as high as 10 tons per year, the odds against finding that amount of contraband would be 1 in 50,000,000 — clearly an impossible task, no matter what amount of money and manpower the Bureau of Customs puts into its attempt. How much does the Bureau of Customs in fact manage to grab each year? In 1977 there were 245 seizures, totalling 277.7 *pounds;* in 1978, 179 seizures totalling 186.6 pounds; in 1979, 173 seizures totalling 122.5 pounds; and in 1980, 149 seizures totalling 268.7 pounds. For this pitiful result, the Bureau of Customs and its informants and spies and undercover agents have squandered millions of dollars.

The reasons for this failure are as obvious as they are elusive. The heroin trade is very, very *profitable*. Between the local, "raw materials" cost of 5¢ or less for a day's "fix" of heroin and the final street price of $100 there is enormous money to be made, *tens of billions of dollars per year,* to be divided between local growers, processors (the laboratory equipment to transform opium into heroin on a large scale costs less than $2000), international smugglers, corrupt customs officials, occasional foreign government officials, occasional CIA agents, local traffickers, street-level "pushers," and corrupt policemen, judges, and the like. No matter how hard we attempt to stop the international traffic, we simply will not succeed. It is time to face that *fact*.

Precisely the same thing can be said about stopping the domestic trafficking once the drug enters the United States. It is a commonplace saying among policemen that for every trafficker who is arrested there is another ready to take his place. The cops who do the arresting know that the main effect of their drug busts will be on their arrest records, not on the streets. Busts may make them look good to superiors, but they will not solve the problem. That, too, is a fact which should finally be faced, without any further rationalizations from authorities.

Indeed, even if it were *possible* to clamp down more on street drug dealing, it might not be *desirable,* if the aim is to reduce property crimes. A study in Detroit in 1976 showed that, as anti-heroin laws were more severely enforced, the price of heroin rose and property crimes increased. Conversely, when law enforcement was lax, the supply of heroin increased, the price dropped, and the crime rate fell as well. Other studies have confirmed this finding. Apparently, as the price rises, infrequent users turn to other drugs or abstain, while hardcore addicts, more likely to commit crimes to support the habit, increase their crime rate so that they can afford heroin.

In short, the attempt to deal with heroin from a supply side has failed, and will continue to fail, no matter what authorities do. Let us turn, then to the "demand-side" approach and its attempt to treat addiction and control crime.

The demand side in action

There are two different concerns on the part of the law enforcement authorities and medical authorities which have been manifested during our war against drugs. One has been to stop the use of heroin, by punishment and treatment. The other has been to reduce the crimes associated with heroin use. Along the way to addressing these issues, we must explode some of the mythology surrounding heroin.

How much crime is committed by heroin users, and how likely are they to be arrested and convicted for such crimes? Two studies cited earlier, "The Criminality of Heroin Addicts When Addicted and When Off Opiates," by Ball, et al., and "Heroin Use and Street Crime," by James Inciardi, shed some light on these questions. Both are methodologically flawed, but come up with some very interesting results

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nonetheless.

The Ball study was based on interviews with 243 male opiate addicts in Baltimore, to establish the number of crimes they committed over an 11-year period. Ball and his associates took a random selection of several hundred heroin users *from the Baltimore police records.* Then they eliminated those who had died during the period in question, those who claimed never to have been addicts, and those who appeared, through a cross-check of police records, to have lied about crimes committed. But the very fact that their way of establishing a pool of opiate users was to use the police files means that the sample was already slanted toward those who were associated with crime. Thus we cannot generalize from the study to the population of opiate users as a whole. This study found that those interviewed were inclined to commit crimes even when they were off heroin. But what is significant are the numbers: the number of "crime days" — when one or more crimes were committed during a single day — averaged 248 per year while they were on drugs, but only 40 when either they were not, or they managed to obtain the drugs at a trivial cost. (Most of the crimes were thefts—drug use or possession was not classified as a crime. What proportion of the remaining crimes come under the "victimless crime" definition, such as prostitution and gambling, is not identified in the study.) Users tended to commit six times as many crimes when using the drug as when not, and occasional users showed a surprising 50-fold increase in crime when using heroin. The study further noted that "one effect of opiate addiction is to raise the number of crimes committed to a threshhold, or support, level. . . ."

Moreover, one of the findings contradicted the myth that heroin users need heroin constantly. These 243 "addicts" spent two-thirds of their time addicted to heroin, and one-third not addicted. As the study says, "the fact that addiction was not a continuous state of drug dependency seemed significant," and even more significant is the *84 percent* decline in the crime rate when the users were off heroin or could obtain it cheaply. Astonishingly, since the authors of the Ball study fail to discuss the crucially important question of the *price* of heroin (preferring to limit their observations to the difference between periods when heroin is being used regularly and when it is not), this last point is lost to them completely. Given the fact that the crimes, by the study's own admission, were being committed to support the drug use, this omission completely invalidates the study's conclusion, to wit, "that it is opiate use itself which is the principal cause of high crime-rates among addicts."

The conclusion simply calls for increased medical intervention to "treat" addicts. Specifically, the authors call for more research (and more research grants?), they ask that "effective" treatment programs be adopted, instead of ineffective (what else?), and they state that "it is time to get on with the task at hand, and not be sidetracked by irrelevant ideological, scholastic, or methodological arguments." In short, don't read their study too carefully or critically, just give them more grants, trust them on what "treatment" programs are effective, and shut up. The refusal to distinguish between the effects of drug use *per se* and the effects of prohibition, which alone causes high drug prices, is unfortunately typical of nearly every study on the subject.

In "Heroin Use and Street Crime," James Inciardi makes some additional acute observations — again, not without flaws. In a study of the Miami area, Inciardi did not use police records; instead he infiltrated the heroin underworld and interviewed its members. He found that "a clear majority of crimes by male heroin users were crimes without victims: almost 60 percent of the criminal behavior reported here was drug sales, prostitution, gambling, and alcohol offenses. . . such [addict] criminality is more often victimless crime than predatory crime." But he also found that most of the other crimes committed were property crimes, not assault-type crimes; and, in a finding which others have confirmed, he established that users are substantially *less* likely to commit violent crimes than nonaddict criminals. (This could be the result of the tranquilizing effect of the drug, or of some other factor.) Forty-seven percent of those studied had been involved in robbery, 69 percent in burglary, 59 percent in shoplifting, 29 percent in vehicle theft, and 92 percent in drug sales.

The most important finding of Inciardi's study, however, was the discovery of how often offenses led to arrest. Three-tenths of one percent of the robberies led to arrest, .7 percent of the burglaries, and .7 percent of the vehicle thefts. In short, the risk of arrest for property crime is very low; of the more than 80,000 crimes committed by the 239 heroin users during a year, only .2 percent resulted in arrest. In another calculation, Inciardi found that the heroin users, because of the non-confrontative crimes they tended to commit, faced only one chance in *three to four hundred* of being arrested for any specific offense.

Obviously, if there is a craving for the drug, and ready availability, even at a high price, most users will elect to take such an insignificant risk. In short, we are bloody well unlikely to bring this crime problem under control by traditional punishment models. This, too, should be accepted as a fact, and our policies questioned accordingly.

Treatment and the medical model

Whenever policymakers become convinced of the two fundamental points we have just made—to wit, that there is no way, realistically speaking, either of cutting off the smuggling of heroin into the United States or of controlling its street distribution and the attendant crime through law enforcement, they turn instead to the medical model — to various forms of "treatment" of the users. These have varied over the years, from maintenance, to isolation and incarceration, back to a version of maintenance again.

After the Harrison Narcotic Act was passed in 1914, doctors continued for a time to prescribe heroin and other opiates to patients who were addicted. But they were increasingly discouraged by the federal government from doing so. Between 1918 and 1920, 44 neighborhood-based maintenance centers opened around the country, but were deemed by the authorities to be failures—first, because they offered long-term opiate-maintenance instead of getting addicts to abstain; second, because doctors had to admit that there was no medically proven treatment for narcotics addiction. The medical establishment itself was split on the worth of the maintenance centers, and the federal authorities used this split as a wedge to drive doctors apart and began closing the clinics as early as 1919. By 1925, the last one was closed.

According to *The Facts About Drug Abuse,* a report of the privately-funded Drug Abuse Council, issued in 1980, law enforcement officials then "moved to consolidate their authority by vigorously prosecuting any physician personally prescribing narcotics to a suspected addict. Between 1914 and 1938, around twenty-five thousand were arrested,

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and more than five thousand actually went to jail, merely for prescribing narcotics to suspected addicts." This effectively sealed the matter, and the great numbers of doctors who were opposed to the new drug policy were silenced. The medical establishment had been blackmailed into supporting the government's position.

In the 1930s, two federal narcotics facilities were set up, in Lexington, Kentucky (1935) and Fort Worth, Texas (1938). Their underlying purpose was to achieve total detoxification, in prolonged isolation from the environment where the drug use occurred. But this program was ultimately a failure, because when they returned to their communities the users simply began using the opiates again. In two different studies of the effectiveness of the Lexington program, one after a few months and one after a few years, only 6.6 percent and 3 percent respectively remained off opiates after their release.

In 1959 the concept of the drug-free community appeared, with Synanon as its earliest model. By now, everyone knows that Synanon also has failed and has been enveloped in scandal and crime — a result that retrospectively seems inevitable. Synanon attempted to deal with the problem of recidivism by having the user give over control of his life to others—often, it was suggested that this might be necessary for a lifetime. But problems developed because, as the Drug Abuse Council euphemistically put it, there was "the lack of voluntary participation as clients by a large number of addicts."

The "lack of voluntary participation" proved to be a problem for more conventional treatment centers, as well. In 1961, Edward Brecher reports in *Licit and Illicit Drugs*,

In its attempt to stop the illegal drug trade, the government has stooped to wiretaps, breaking and entering, illegal searches and seizures, and the harassment of suspected smugglers, sometimes ending in tragedy.

California launched its large-scale civil commitment program for narcotics addicts. This program permits addicts to be locked up without first being convicted of a crime. Instead of being called "prisoners" or "prison inmates," the addicts are called "residents"—not of prisons but of "rehabilitation centers."... Part of the time is spent "in residence," that is, locked up, and the rest on "outpatient status," that is, on parole.

Naturally enough, the success rate was miniscule. And since in California, as in New York, the law provides for the incarceration not only of addicts but also of "persons in imminent danger of becoming addicted" (usually, a person

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in possession of an opiate who is not a user), many of the "successes" reported in both California and New York were people who had been imprisoned and then released *who swore all along that they were not addicts!*

Then the authorities discovered methadone maintenance. Astonishing claims have been made for the success of methadone clinics, but here, too, there is less than meets the eye. Even at a time when such claims were generally unquestioned, Edward Brecher pointed out that the vast majority of those who left the maintenance treatment either had relapsed, or had used other drugs in a disabling way, or had become alcoholics, or had been arrested, or had died. Seven years later, the Drug Abuse Council came to the same conclusion.

On practical grounds, methadone did help some addicts to stabilize their lives, but legal heroin would have done the same. And methadone overdoses occurred perhaps more frequently than did true heroin overdoses. But, more important, let us reflect on the medical ideology at work here. Methadone is a synthetic opiate, but with an important difference. It duplicates many of heroin's effects, but *without* the "high" or euphoria that heroin produces, and it also blocks any effect from heroin itself. ("The pharmacological actions of single doses of methadone are qualitatively identical to those of morphine," says Goodman and Gilman's *The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics,* and adds, "Side effects caused by methadone are similar to those caused by morphine.")

Why then is heroin seen as a disease to be treated, while methadone is seen as a drug used for treatment? The only possible answer underlines a particularly ugly form of puritanism—heroin is pleasurable, while methadone is not. Therefore, heroin addicts are to be oppressed, and methadone addicts to be given methadone at taxpayers' expense. Note that the distinction between the drugs *themselves* is almost entirely an ideological and political, not a medical one.

No wonder that only a tiny percent of those who leave methadone clinics remain off opiates. And no wonder that many turn instead to alcohol. And that little fact closes a circle which should be remarked on.

In the nineteenth century, opium was prescribed to alcoholics as a nonaddicting cure for alcoholism. After morphine was isolated, it was touted by doctors, praised for its nonaddictive qualities, and prescribed as a cure for *opium* addiction. When heroin was synthesized in Germany, it was widely lauded as a "safe preparation free from addiction-forming properties," and was promptly prescribed as a cure for *morphine* addiction. Then methadone was introduced, as a cure for heroin addiction, and now many people addicted to methadone are getting off *it* — by turning to alcohol. We have, in little more than a century, come full circle.

Treatment isn't working, hasn't worked, and will not work in the future. The primary reason for this, though unadmitted, is that most habitual users do not consider themselves sick; they simply want to use heroin. Indeed, what counselors regard as "treatment" is seen simply as a less distasteful form of punishment than going to prison.

A natural response to these facts might be that we should move to a system such as that in Britain. And the usual retort is that "the British system is failing." The British system isn't failing; it's being sabotaged.

Before 1968, British doctors were allowed simply to prescribe heroin for anyone who was an "addict." In 1968, the system was changed. Now the distribution of heroin to nonaddicts is illegal, but clinics have been set up to dispense it in carefully limited amounts. The clinics are allowed by law to dispense just enough to keep an addict from going through withdrawal, and no more. This regulation was based on the false assumption that "addiction" causes a person to require a given amount every day. Heroin users, on the contrary, are remarkably flexible about their heroin use.

By the 1970s, the British system of heroin maintenance had begun to mutate into a treatment program. Doctors were given more and more power over their addict clients. They began to catch the "American disease" of wanting to control these clients' behavior and habits. They were given the power to decide to dispense methadone rather than heroin, essentially because methadone had attained the status of a "state religion," while heroin-taking was increasingly seen as "heresy." Since methadone prevents withdrawal, but produces no sense of euphoria or well-being, many addicts subjected to this medical tinkering choose to look for heroin itself on the black market.

And, with the typical incomprehension of "experts," most of those in the drug abuse business didn't understand what was happening. To therapists, the addict needed help to solve a problem, the problem being that he took a drug of which they disapproved. But to the addicts, the only problem was how to get the drugs they wanted. They didn't see themselves as "sick," and they didn't want "treatment." Those who were intervening to control their behavior reacted as such people always do—whether they be central planners trying to make people conform to some national plan, or foreign policy planners trying to control people in other countries—by getting angry with people who didn't appreciate their "expert" intervention into their lives. The victimizers, in short, blamed the victims. This *is* a problem, but it is a problem with drug prohibition, not drug addiction. The problem is that therapists refuse to face the fact that some people do not want to be controlled. When other people try to treat them for something for which they don't want treatment, they usually try to free themselves from the controllers. This is why the British system is failing, and why our own methadone programs are failing, as well.

Naturally, as the systems and clinics and treatments fail, there are always a flurry of "new" studies ready to be released, studies pretending, once again, to have discovered the true problem, to propose new solutions, and to accept new government grants for research and treatment. There is a good deal of money to be made in "studies" and in "treatment," but not much in simply letting people alone. That and that alone is why we face our present impasse.

Demythologizing heroin

Why then should heroin remain illegal? The answers usually given are crime, biochemical effects, social consequences, and overdoses. Let us examine them in turn.

D.C. Police Chief Maurice Turner was asked about the effect of crime on making heroin legally available, in an interview with *LR,* and his answer was that the user would still have to pay $100 a day and would still commit crimes. Only if the government subsidized the price of heroin, to get it down to about $10, he said, would there by any marked change in the crime rate.

Unfortunately, Turner's answer demonstrates the amount

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of misinformation held even by responsible law-enforcement authorities. The fact is that it is only government *prohibition* of drugs such as heroin which keeps the price as high as it is. Let us calculate what the price of heroin (or morphine, a nearly perfect substitute) would be if it were available, with a doctor's prescription, or over the counter at drug stores, to anyone of legal age. Morphine is already legal — although tightly controlled — for some uses in the United States, so it is known that it costs, to a pharmacy, 15¢ per 30 mg tablet. The ratio of effectiveness of morphine to heroin is 1:2 or 1:3, differing from person to person. Therefore, a 45 mg per day heroin habit could be maintained by a maximum of 135 mg of morphine, at a cost per day of 68¢. Even with a 100 percent pharmacist's markup, the price would only be $1.35 per day (plus approximately 15¢ for a disposable syringe, if it could be purchased legally). In short, *the cost of maintaining a daily heroin habit on a relatively free market would be about $1.50 per day.* Who would become a professional criminal for the cost of a gallon of gasoline or two packs of cigarettes a day?

If we combine this finding—which is actually of a higher price than would exist in a truly free market (morphine manufacture is monopolized by one or two drug companies, at the government's insistence)—with the finding of the Ball study, we can conclude that if heroin or morphine were legally available, the rate of heroin users' crime would drop by 84 percent. If, as is commonly thought by police, heroin users commit some 40 percent of the property crimes in this country, then a policy permitting legally available heroin would cause about a 30 percent drop in crime, virtually overnight.

This leaves the problem of the harmful effects of heroin, overdoses, and social consequences still to be addressed.

Let us begin with a quotation from one of heroin's sharpest critics, neoconservative James Q. Wilson: "There are apparently no specific pathologies — serious illnesses or physiological deterioration—that are known to result from heroin use per se." ("Heroin," in *Thinking About Crime*)

Virtually everything which is popularly believed about heroin's effects is untrue. Government and media-spread scare stories about drug-crazed zombies roaming the streets, preying on innocent victims, have for years now obscured some important medical facts about heroin. The opiates are essentially central nervous system tranquilizers and painkillers which are often, but not always, addictive. "Addiction" means that when deprived of a substance, an "addict" experiences uneasiness and psychological craving and also certain "withdrawal symptoms" of both a physical and a psychological nature. Some people experience few unpleasant symptoms from "detoxification," others experience extreme nervousness, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

When used by addicts, heroin relieves pain and produces mild euphoria and tranquility, sedation, and sometimes sleep. It relieves coughing and can relieve diarrhea, even sometimes producing constipation. Studies and experiments have failed to show that the average dose taken by a heroin user today produces *any* long-term physical or psychological deterioration. The most common side effects of taking the drug are constipation and constriction of the eye pupils. Several studies have determined how heroin users themselves perceive the drug. In one survey, 71 heavy users made a total of 449 checks to describe how they were affected. Only 8 said it was "thrilling"; 11 said that it made them "jolly"; 53 said it "relieves worry"; and 65 said that it "relaxed" them. It apparently relieves a user's fear of pain, anxiety about pain, and physical and emotional reactions to pain. It also seems to relieve depression.

Anyone who wishes to understand the depth of our misperception of the opiates should read books such as Edward Brecher's *Licit and Illicit Drugs* (written with the editors of *Consumer's Union*) and Thomas Szasz's masterly *Ceremonial Chemistry: The Ritual Persecution of Drugs, Addicts and Pushers,* as well as a reputable pharmacology text, such as Goodman and Gilman's *The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics*. For now, let us examine a summary of some surprising findings in these works.

In investigating the actual effects of heroin, Edward Brecher found scientific support for common assumptions about it difficult to find. In 1956, Dr. George G. Stevenson and his British Columbia associates made an inquiry into narcotics addiction, during which they researched the existent medical literature exhaustively. Brecher quotes their report, as follows:

> When we began this project, it was immediately apparent to us that the actual deleterious effects of addiction on the addict, and on society, should be clearly understood. . . . To our surprise we have not been able to locate even one scientific study on the proved harmful effects of addiction. Earlier investigators had apparently assumed that the ill effects were so obvious as not to need scientific verification. . . . We have assembled over 500 documents on various phases of addiction . . . but not one of them offers a clear-cut, scientifically valid statement on this problem.

They began their research with *The Traffic in Narcotics* by U.S. Commissioner of Narcotics Harry Anslinger, but that book contained only a single reference to "a decrease in the potential social productivity of the addict," and even this was unsupported by evidence. Stevenson and his associates wrote to the most eminent research workers in the field, trying to get scientific information on the deleterious effects of opiates.

> They indicated, in their reply, that there was no real evidence of brain damage or other serious organic disease resulting from the continued use of narcotics . . . but that there was undoubtedly psychological and social damage. However, they made no differentiation between such damage as might be caused by narcotics and that which might have been present before addiction, or might have been caused, at least in part, by other factors.
>
> Moreover, they were unable to direct us to any actual studies on the alleged harmful effects of narcotic drugs.

Neither, in fact, was the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, nor the Narcotic Control Division of the Canadian Government's Department of Health and Welfare. Brecher surveyed the entire literature written since this Canadian study was performed, and said in 1972 that his efforts had been only slightly more successful. What he concluded was this: "Almost all of the deleterious effects ordinarily attributed to the opiates, indeed, appeared to be the effects of the narcotics laws instead."

The classical study was done in the 1920s, in a Philadelphia hospital, of 861 addicts. Each had been addicted for at least five years, some for as long as 20, taking on the average 21 grains of morphine per day — more than 30 times the dose taken by an average street addict. The study showed that "morphine addiction is not characterized by physical deterioration or impairment of physical fitness aside from the addiction per se. There is no evidence of change in the circulatory, hepatic, renal or endocrine functions." The members of the group each weighed within one percent of the norm for height and age.

What about other deleterious effects? Let's take a quick

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checklist: (1) Yellowness of skin. This is present only when addicts live in unsanitary conditions; otherwise their skin is normal. (2) Anemia. This is caused by poor dietary habits, generally caused by addicts spending most of their money on drugs. (3) Dental problems. These are caused by not going to the dentist; again, users tend to spend most of their money on drugs. (4) Hepatitis. This is caused by unsterile syringes, a problem which would be alleviated if syringes were legally available. Also, if heroin were available in undiluted forms, users might sniff, smoke, or take it orally rather than injecting it.

All of these "commonly observed" harmful effects are the results either of drug prohibition or of user irresponsibility — not of heroin itself.

Do users exhibit bizarre behavior? Dr. George Wallace made a study of that at Bellevue Hospital, and said, "The addict when not deprived of his opium showed no abnormal behavior which distinguished him from a non-addict." In the case of returning Vietnam veterans, it was also impossible to distinguish between heroin users and non-users by behavior or appearance. Tests of urine were required.

Finally, let us take up the case of overdoses. In very heavy doses, opiates can produce death through respiratory depression, although this is in fact very rare. Death from such an overdose is a slow process, taking between 1 and 12 hours, and there is a commonly available antidote, nalorphine. In 1931, Drs. Lawrence Kolb and A. G. DuNez of the U.S. Public Health Service estimated that it would take 500 mg — 50 street "bags" — injected as a single dose to kill an average non-addicted person. And because of the factor of growing tolerance, most addicts would require even more (in the Philadelphia study previously discussed, some addicts reported using 28 grains — 1680 mg — per day). In a hospital study, one user was injected with 1800 mg of morphine over two and a half hours, and it didn't even make him sick. In the same study, heavy users, given sudden dosage increases of 6, 7, and 9 times normal, didn't even become drowsy.

What of the overdoses commonly reported in the press? They are generally not the result of heroin alone, but of several substances in lethal combination. It should be noted that the "heroin" on the street is only 3 to 5 percent heroin — the rest is a combination of other substances, including, on occasion, quinine, strychnine, talc, battery acid, and sugar. One Brooklyn study found 16 different additives in a sample of street-quality heroin. When such a combination is injected directly into the bloodstream, some people have an allergic reaction which can cause instantaneous pulmonary edema, thus stopping breathing. (Another lethal combination which is commonly called an overdose is the taking of street-quality heroin while drinking alcohol — probably what caused the death of Janis Joplin.) Street quality heroin contains the impurities which result in these reported fatalities *only because the drug is illegal.* If heroin were legal, there could be quality control.

Moreover, the fact that most heroin-related deaths are not caused simply by taking too much heroin is known to many medical examiners. In February 1969, N.Y.C. Deputy Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Michael M. Baden told a meeting of AMA physicians that "the majority of deaths are due to an acute reaction to the intraveneous injection of the heroin-quinine-sugar mixture. ... Death is not due to a pharmacological overdose in the vast majority of cases."

Why has the myth of massive numbers of heroin overdoses persisted? Political propaganda is an important factor, as is deliberate talking down to reporters by medical examiners. Medical examiners who know that deaths are in fact resulting from impurities, or the mixing of different drugs have become content to use the term "heroin overdose" or "heroin-related death" as medical metaphors covering a multitude of sins. Finally, there is the unfortunate fact that journalists do not choose to educate themselves on these issues. The real story that needs to be told is not one about a mythical 8-year-old addict, such as the falsification which won Janet Cooke a Pulitzer Prize at *The Washington Post*, but the story of how the press and public *came to accept the* heroin mythology in the first place.

Unfortunately, by continually falsifying, intentionally or not, the truth about heroin overdoses, the press, police, and medical examiners are having the effect of keeping the truth away from people who do in fact use heroin and risk death. By telling the truth, we can *save lives.*

The repeal of prohibition

We have shown that neither the supply of nor the demand for heroin can be controlled, that drug-related crime is committed because of drug prohibition, not drug abuse, that treatment centers don't work, and that addicts, victims of crime, and taxpayers alike are being harmed by our policy of drug prohibition. Perhaps some people will now step forth and propose an experiment (isolated and controlled, naturally) in the legalization or decriminalization of the opiates.

The fact is that such an experiment has already been performed. It is called the nineteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, the century of individualism, individual responsibility, great achievements, risks, and liberty, there were no drug laws. And neither was there any drug problem. Brecher writes, "drugs were not viewed as a menace to society ... and they were not in fact a menace." Drugs were "as freely accessible as aspirin is today." Opiates were regularly used in most communities throughout America, and by some of the most prominent people — including noted temperance advocates, who fought the use of whiskey. Yet there was no significant disruption of family life or of society. There was no crime because of the drug use. Citing Brecher again,

> Opium use was ... frowned upon in some circles as *immoral* — a vice akin to dancing, smoking or sexual promiscuity. But while deemed immoral ... opiate use was not subject to the moral sanctions current today. ... Addicts continued to participate fully in the life of the community. ... Thus the nineteenth century avoided one of the most disastrous effects of current narcotic laws and attitudes — the rise of a deviant addict subculture, cut off from respectable society and without a "road back" to respectability.

Why did we abandon such a policy of tolerance and freedom? The sad, ugly little truth is that the first anti-opiate laws were passed in San Francisco and elsewhere as part of a vicious policy of scapegoating and harassing Chinese people, for whom opiate use was as much a part of normal life as alcohol is in contemporary America. Just as in the case of the prohibition of alcohol, nothing worked, and we were led, by the logic of bigotry and intolerance and failed programs, into a nightmare of prohibition of the opiates. That policy, misconceived and unworkable, has continued from 1914, when the Harrison Narcotic Act was passed, until our own time. And few people today, even those who know better, are willing to speak the truth about the problem.

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Some time ago, in commenting on a new piece of legislation, a reputable authority said,

> The really serious results of this legislation ... will only appear gradually and will not always be recognized as such. These will be the failures of promising careers, the disrupting of happy families, the commission of crimes which will never be traced to their real cause, and the influx of many who would otherwise live socially competent lives into hospitals for the mentally disoriented.

That was the *New York Medical Journal*, in May 1915, commenting on the newly passed Harrison Narcotic Act.

Desperately attempting to stop the trafficking in narcotics and marijuana, the U.S. government uses air-reconnaissance, working with local officials and foreign governments to identify and destroy crops.

And *American Medicine* criticized the law, too, claiming that as one of its effects, drugs would be driven into an unsanitary and criminal underworld, that "afflicted individuals [would be] under the control of the worst elements of society." This is precisely what has happened.

And for what? To prevent overdoses? There would probably be fewer if heroin were legal, since adulterants would not be present. To stop the spread of drugs? But it is the enormous profit in dealing in illegal drugs that encourages that very spread.

Nor should it be said that if drugs were legal, there would be no way of helping addicts who needed help. Alcohol is legal, and there is everything from Alcoholics Anonymous to detoxification centers to profit-making programs like that promoted by the Shick Centers. Similarly, if heroin were legal, there could be true treatment of a problem, when a drug user felt he had one. There would be the *choice* of whether to seek treatment, and of what kind. There would be competitive solutions, with no threats of incarceration or of forms of "treatment" which were really punishment.

Almost no one is really looking at the problem from the addicts' point of view. Why do people take such drugs as heroin? Any visit into any ghetto will supply the answer: people are unhappy, in pain, frustrated, and full of a sense of futility about life. Many of them feel trapped in lives of angry desolation, as if there is no path to fulfillment or cause for hope. And, despite their criminal activities, it should be noticed that many of these are the best, not the worst, of the poor. In their "hustling" and seizing of opportunities, *they are classical entrepreneurs* whose energy and abilities, if only channeled into productive rather than criminal areas, would seem nothing short of amazing. What we should do is deregulate our cities and give them a chance to succeed.

Looking at the problem another way, centuries ago, we experienced massive bloodshed during religious wars, when people who accepted one religion tried to stamp out those who accepted another. We solved this problem of religious warfare by accepting the principles of freedom of religion, and tolerance. Today we can only stop the drug war by a similar principle: what Thomas Szasz calls the right to self-medication, or the right to inject whatever drugs one wants, so long as one takes responsibility for one's actions.

Our drug prohibitors have become humanitarians with a guillotine, causing the very suffering that so many of them want so desperately to end. Let those who want to help others with problems with drugs, be free to do so—but only with the full, voluntary consent of those with whom they deal. And let us have an end to the new prohibition, which is bringing us crime and degradation. It is no vice to admit that our policies have been wrong; it is no virtue any longer to remain silent, while lives are ruined and cities destroyed. Authorities find themselves at their wits' end; it is time to use our wits anew. ❑

Roy A. Childs, Jr. is the editor of *The Libertarian Review*. This article was written with the aid of substantial research done by Lee Williams, *LR*'s research director.

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THE SHORTAGE IN HOUSING

The Crisis that Government Built

BRUCE COOLEY

Two years ago, American homebuilders heard a sobering prediction. The United States "faces a revolution of the unhoused masses" in the next decade, speaker W. Scott Biddle told a meeting of the Building Industry Association. "It comes down to the fact that there are a great many frustrated, angry people today, and there will be millions more by 1990. They cannot buy a home because they can't afford one. They cannot rent a home because they can't afford one, or because rental units simply aren't available." Biddle was not alone in his apocalyptic view of the situation. *U.S. News* reported, "There is mounting [political] pressure from angry consumers who, because of soaring prices, are being denied one of the basic American Dreams." (April 12, 1979) And a report prepared by The Association of American Geographers warned, "American cities will turn into battlegrounds in the 1980s, when suburbanites... return to the cities and displace the poor."

Frustration, anger, political pressure, battlegrounds—this is an ominous picture being projected of America in the 1980s. If it is not to be realized, sweeping changes in urban housing policy are needed, and they must be based on an understanding of how the housing crisis came about, and of the fact that it is the product of two developing conflicts, one political and one social. The political battle is in the arena of housing supply; the social struggle, in the arena of housing demand.

The politicians on the one hand and the landlords and the building industry on the other are battling over building codes, zoning, rent control, and condominium conversion. The politicians, while claiming to act in the interests of the poor and elderly, are exploiting their condition to gain political power, exploiting it in ways which actually have an *adverse* effect on the very groups they say they want to help.

The building industry and the landlords want to divest the politicians of some of their power over the market, in order to stay afloat financially, and ultimately to provide housing for everyone—at a profit. The battle between the two sides is further complicated by another legacy of government action—the results of urban renewal.

The second conflict taking shape is a social struggle between the inner-city poor and the middle class that is moving into the city—primarily the members of the "baby-boom" generation. It is a conflict without villains, with victims on both sides—victims of demographics and political power.

In the period following World War II, large numbers of poor people and minorities migrated to urban areas. Black people, a major segment of this group, fled the racism and economic hardships of the rural South and the Midwest. They moved to Northeastern cities to take advantage of the burgeoning job opportunities caused by the industrial war economy of World War II.

Racism, however, was not confined to the South. When blacks started pouring into the Northeastern cities, and when young blacks started going to the same schools and playing in the same neighborhoods as the children of the white inner-city dwellers, hundreds of thousands of white middle-class families fled the inner cities for the more expensive and less minority-populated suburbs.

Ever since this flight, the poor have been struggling to find jobs and housing in the economically deteriorating cities.

This struggle is now being intensified because the baby-boom generation is looking back toward the inner cities for housing opportunities. The baby-boom generation, the largest single generation in America's history, has caused turmoil and radical change in each stage of life that they have gone through so far. Its members were born between 1946 and 1964, poured into schools and universities in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and transformed themselves from the flower children of the '60s to the "me generation" of the 1970s. And now they've moved into the housing market and are competing with the poor for urban housing.

cities
DEAD OR ALIVE?

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The political battle: building codes

Despite the relative wealth of the new generation of housing consumers, the building industry operates at a level far below its capacity. What could stop the building industry from supplying the needed quantity of housing in the 1980s? The answer is government: building codes, zoning, rent control, and urban renewal.

Building codes first appeared in America in the late 1800s, legally controlling building materials and designs, ostensibly to maintain the "structural integrity" of buildings and to protect the consumer from faulty electrical wiring and

construction practices. What they actually do is "protect" the consumer from *any* construction practice, faulty or not, which differs from those spelled out in the codes. And in the process they make housing more expensive. One veteran builder, Sol Sylvan of Kennewick, Washington, put it this way: "[The codes] tend to become treated by the officials who enforce them as religious dogma." This, he argues, limits the introduction of innovations in building materials and designs.

One example Sylvan offers is the use of plastic wasteline in plumbing as a substitute for copper wasteline. Plastic tubing is not explicitly prohibited by the codes, but most codes describe the quality and type of *copper* tubing that must be used in any building, thereby effectively excluding the use of any other type of tubing. Plastic tubing, in fact, offers an important potential advantage over copper tubing: lower cost. The material costs less and so does shipping it, because the plastic is much lighter than the copper. But even those who want to use the best grade of copper tubing are hampered by the codes. David Dawson, a New York sculptor, was told by a building inspector that the quality copper tubing he had installed in his studio had to be removed *because* it was of a higher quality than that called for in the building code specifications.

It has been argued that a way to remedy this kind of situation is to give building inspectors the power to exempt a structure when techniques and materials being used are of a higher quality than that required by law.

But such a discretionary power is rarely used, even when it exists. As Sylvan points out, "The building inspectors are reluctant to [waive regulations] because they're afraid they'll lose their job [because they didn't follow the codes], or that ten years from now someone will say 'Aha, you screwed up!'"

Sylvan claims that many of today's building codes are based on performance tests that are long outdated. "There are very, very few codes that are written from a performance

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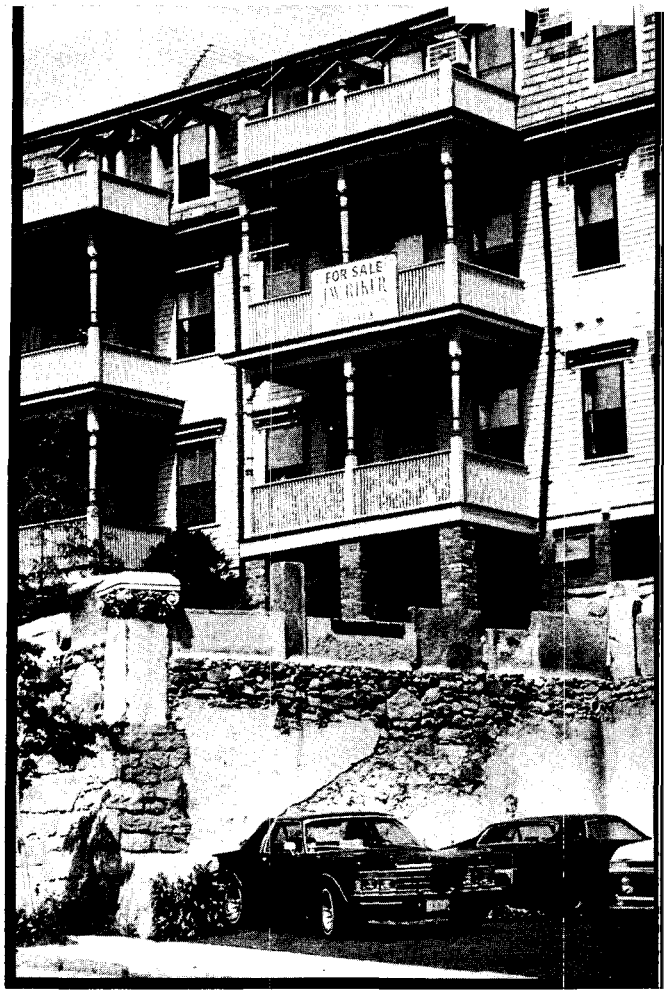

PETER MORGAN/PICTURE GROUP

Rent control forces many apartment owners to convert their units into condominiums.

point of view. They are written from rote." Therefore, those codes that are supposed to ensure a minimum quality home —that is, a minimum "performance" in building techniques —effectively discourage the adoption of new and superior technologies for homes in all price ranges.

Not only do codes inhibit innovation, they also are a contributor to the rising cost of housing. One estimate holds that building codes add at least 15 percent to the cost of new homes.

Building codes also help to centralize the building industry, since many small companies cannot afford the construction delays and consequent loss of cash flow inherent in the present process. And building codes limit the amount of home improvements taking place as well as the amount of new construction, which means that existing housing deteriorates faster. Homeowners who want to refurbish their homes or to build new homes are often reluctant to tackle the permit process, and for good reason. Consider the case of Patrick Hazel of Santa Clara County, California. After buying a lot, Hazel went to the local authorities to get a permit to construct his own home. There he was told that he would have to fill out an application, pay various fees, and submit 12 copies of the lot plan, several copies of the deed of trust, and several copies of the survey map, *before* he could submit his house plans for approval. "I told him, 'Forget it, Charlie. I'm not going to submit myself to 12 different agencies,'" Hazel says, and he proceeded to build his house without any permits—whereupon he was slapped with civil and criminal actions by Santa Clara County. Hazel insists that he is not only meeting but *exceeding* all health, safety, and construction standards that are required. All he is doing is bypassing a lengthy, expensive, and "unconstitutional process that is no 'protection' at all." When we remember that building codes are supposedly designed to protect the *consumer* from rapacious builders, what can we say about cases like this, where they are used to prevent people from building their own homes to suit *themselves?*

It is tempting to agree with another do-it-yourself home builder, Richard Russo, who was actually jailed for a short time because his remodeling projects did not conform to the local building codes. (He had refused to go through the normal channels of government approval because, on a previous occasion, a project he started in 1977 was delayed by red tape until *1980.)* Russo believes that building codes were *designed* to curb do-it-yourself home improvement, by limiting home improvement to those who can afford a contractor and, in the process, excluding the low and moderate income homeowners from home improvement.

Whether Russo is right about this or not, it is obvious that building codes aggravate the scarcity of housing for the poor in yet another way. They have become one of the favorite techniques used to displace the poor to make room for the middle class in urban areas. As James David Besser described the process in the January 1979 *Progressive,* "Building code enforcement, notoriously lax in deteriorating neighborhoods, suddenly becomes strict, and many lower and fixed-income homeowners cannot afford the required repairs. They sell out for a profit, but the prices they receive are usually not enough to offset the high cost of replacement housing."

Thus, building codes have become a political weapon which is victimizing developers, individual homeowners, and the poor in different ways, but with the same result: increasing scarcity of housing.

Zoning

There is not yet much political opposition to building codes. Possible alternatives have rarely been explored, and too few people as yet recognize the additional costs they impose on home buyers and renters. But zoning regulations *are* the subject of an increasingly active political battle. These regulations have been developed in various cities primarily to separate businesses and residential districts, attempting to divide land into residential, business, and industrial districts. This division is usually done by a local zoning board, often with disastrous effects. Zoning boards have long been prone to political corruption. To illustrate, the president of an Illinois development company was once asked whether he thought that his local zoning board would prevent him from developing an executive park as he wanted. He replied, "No problem . . . it's simply a matter of 'influencing' enough board members . . . if you catch the drift."

Zoning ordinances have contributed to increasing housing costs, both in land and in buildings. Residential land prices rose 62 per cent between 1975 and 1979, and as much as 35 per cent of that increase has been attributed to zoning requirements which specify the minimum square footage of land or building permissible per unit. The number of available lots has been reduced, tending to bid prices up. Multiple-unit buildings, too, are often subject to restrictions specifying the number of individual units which can be built.

In the suburbs especially, zoning has been used as a weapon against low-income and minority people, institut-

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ing high-cost minimum-area requirements and effectively forcing these "unwanted" groups to remain in the densely populated inner cities. Even the federal government recognizes this. One recent study by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) concluded, for example, that "zoning regulations have constricted land supply severely, particularly for low and moderate-income housing." This intensifies the resentment of the poor toward the middle class, since the upward mobility of the poor is limited by the absence of areas open to relocation at an affordable cost.

The underlying argument for zoning, as Michael Goldberg and Peter Harwood have pointed out in a Fraser Institute study on zoning, is almost pure fallacy: "Market mechanisms exist naturally to eliminate such externalities that would arise from the proverbial glue factory on the corner of Portage and Main." They go on to say,

> In a system based on the inviolability of private property rights, the laws of nuisance would prevent the dispersion of invasive odors or dust particles. But the market mechanism functions even without this protection. Quite simply, land prices in the residential or business neighborhoods are too expensive for the glue factories. They effectively prohibit any but the most valuable, concentrated uses—such as office buildings or high-rise residential dwellings. *[Zoning: Its Costs and Relevance for the 80s]*

Roscoe Jones, Director of City Planning in Houston, Texas, has added his voice to those opposed to zoning (Houston has never implemented zoning restrictions), and has said, "[The market] has tended to create a reasonably well-ordered pattern. Because of private 'marketplace zoning,' we find no filling stations at the end of the cul-de-sac...."

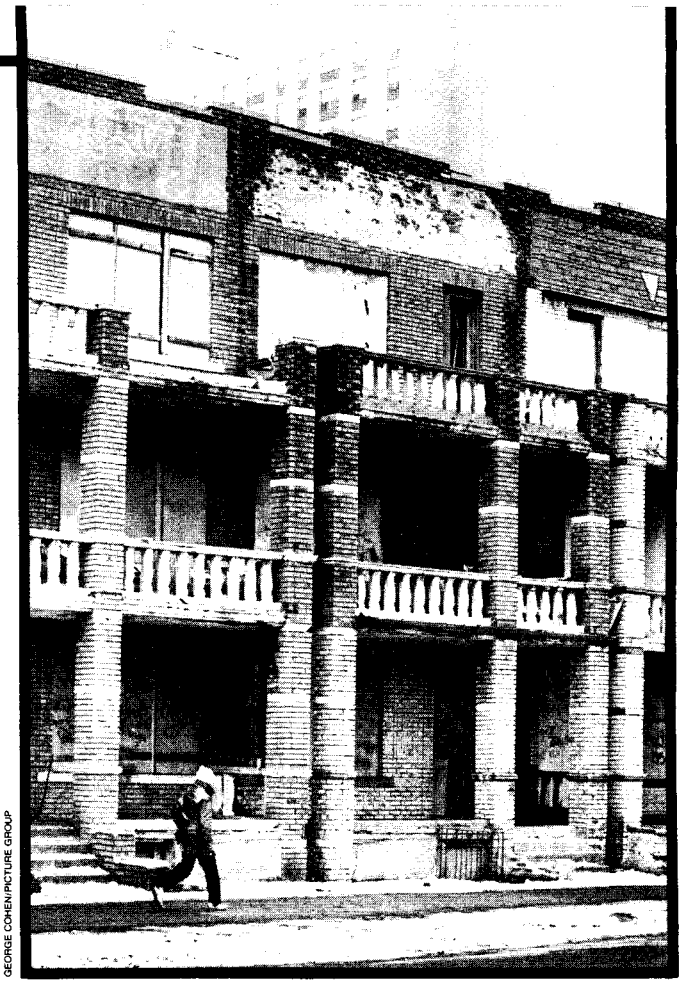
Of course, of what *real* value are zoning ordinances if they can be rescinded at any time by a political decision? With no body of nuisance laws or strict legal respect for property rights, members of a community *could* end up with a glue factory as a neighbor.

A new trend is called "inclusionary zoning," designed to vent the frustration and anger of the poor who, largely because of past zoning practices, are hard-pressed to find newly-constructed low-income housing. Inclusionary zoning requires that a certain percentage of any development project must be sold or rented at some price which is arbitrarily lower than the other units. The problem with this is illustrated by a question asked in the real estate pages of the *Los Angeles Times:* "How can a builder build X houses at his normal profit margin, and Y houses at a loss, without either (a) reducing his overall margin profit to such a low level that he would be better off investing in Treasury Bills, or (b) maintaining his normal percentage of profit by virtue of marking up the price of conventional units to offset the loss he is taking on the affordable units?" (August 17, 1980) So it is that inclusionary zoning drives housing prices upward.

If inclusionary zoning is the wave of the future, then it is a dim future indeed, for the building industry, home buyers, and renters. No "correction" in zoning laws will help to solve the housing crisis, for adjustments made to help one group of housing consumers inevitably hurt other groups.

Urban renewal

Perhaps the most spectacular failure of any government involvement in housing was the federal urban renewal program. Hailed at its inception as "the fountainhead of the revival of our inner cities," the program became an embarrassment even to its administrators and ultimately collapsed in a pile of rubble of its own creation.



GEORGE COHEN/PICTURE GROUP

In New York City, 20,000 landlords went bankrupt between 1967 and 1970, and 30,000 units are abandoned annually.

The urban renewal process followed a few simple steps. First, city governments used federal money and the power of eminent domain to buy vast tracts of inner-city property. They would then demolish the existing structures (usually apartment buildings for low-income tenants) and prepare the land for development. The land was sold to the highest private bidder who erected a new structure according to a federally approved development plan. Sometimes office buildings were erected, sometimes apartment buildings. But a high percentage of the apartments constructed were expensive luxury apartments; very few were within the price range of the displaced tenants, unless, that is, they asked for and received government subsidies.

In their book *Free to Choose*, Milton and Rose Friedman say this about urban renewal:

> More dwelling units were destroyed than were built [400,000 more]. Those families who got apartments at subsidized rents benefitted. Those families who were forced to move to poorer housing because their homes were destroyed and not replaced were worse off.

The worse aspect of urban renewal, however, is the composition of its victims. In fact, urban renewal was, in terms of results, one of the most racist federal programs ever conceived. An estimated 65 per cent of displaced residents were black or Hispanic, and were replaced by residents or office workers who were predominantly white.

What harm urban renewal has done is in the past; the program receives no more appropriations. But this program

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The red tape of building codes causes expenses and delays which almost excludes low income owners from home improvement.

and similar, smaller-scale government ventures were an integral part of the stage set for the political and social struggles coming in the 1980s.

Rent control and "condomania"

Which brings us to the hottest political battle and the prime villain in the coming housing crisis—rent control. A legacy from World War II, rent control was originally an attempt to stabilize the rental market in Eastern cities when millions flocked from the depressed rural areas to the boom of wartime opportunities in urban areas. As the rampant inflation of the 1970s destroyed the economic stability of America's tenants, rent controls appeared to be a natural panacea.

The major effect of rent control is to turn formerly profitable rental units into financial losses for landlords—the ownership of rent-controlled units has in fact become the bane of many landlords' financial existence.

Because of this primary effect, many side effects result, especially discouraging investment in the construction of new apartment buildings. Most cities with rent control experience a stagnant or even shrinking supply of rental units. Banks and insurance companies often refuse to make loans on rental unit construction that will be subject to rent controls.

Rent control also encourages landlords to abandon their rental property. In New York City, a longtime bastion of rent control, 20,000 landlords went bankrupt between 1967 and 1970. Some 30,000 rental units are abandoned by owners *annually.* Even worse is the emergence of a new trend called "arson for profit." This occurs when a landlord who is losing heavily on rent-controlled property hires arsonists to "torch" the building. The landlord then receives insurance money and makes up for his losses—and leaves displaced tenants and devastated areas such as New York City's South Bronx.

If not destroyed, rent-controlled buildings are allowed to deteriorate. In some California cities, for instance, suppliers of maintenance equipment for landlords have suffered a 30 to 70 per cent loss in business since rent control was imposed. Many cities under rent control—Santa Monica, California is a recent example—have apartment vacancy rates of 1 or 2 per cent, compared to the national average of 5 per cent. Among other things, rent control encourages tenants to stay in their apartments longer than they ordinarily might.

They sometimes don't get to stay as long as they would like, however, because rent control induces landlords to convert their rental units into condominiums, almost always requiring substantial cash down payments and high monthly payments, both beyond the capacity of most renters to handle.

Horror stories of the impact of condominium conversion on individual renters are common. Notified that they must come up with several thousand dollars in a few weeks or move, they feel victimized; their most often heard complaint is, "We have nowhere else to go." And they don't, for in a rent-controlled city, vacancies in affordable rental housing have virtually disappeared. The displaced renters have become what the *New York Times* called "urban nomads—primarily elderly, on fixed incomes and poor and young, black and white." Their frustration and anger is rising. They see a life's worth of work trying to find a stable home going down the drain. And they feel they are victims of the free market.

The cruel fact, however, is that they are victims of something quite the opposite of free-market processes: government intervention. Yet they turn for help to the rent-controlling bureaucrats whom they should in fact be calling, as they often call landlords and developers, "greedy," "power-hungry," and "insensitive to the problems of the poor."

Condominium conversions, therefore, may suffer during the 1980s as the political battle intensifies, and politicians exploit the frustration of the displaced to reclaim their power over the housing market. Many cities have started to curb condo conversions by measures ranging from limiting the number of units converted each year to banning conversions outright.

In Los Angeles, an ordinance has been passed which provides that a request for conversion can be denied if the vacancy rate in the area is less than 5 percent (as it is in most of Los Angeles), and if it can be shown that the conversion would contribute to the shortage of rental housing in the area. The ordinance provides further that owners allowed to convert must help displaced tenants find new apartments and must pay part of their moving costs and subsidize higher rents for a full year. Those who convert must also "contribute" $500 per converted unit to a government fund set up to

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help rental housing. By decreasing the freedom of landlords and converters, measures like these will discourage investment in any housing developments at all and will aggravate the housing crisis further.

The social struggle

If the political battle among tenants, landlords, developers, bureaucrats, and elected officials has become emotionally charged, the social struggle among economic classes in the cities could turn the 1980s into a replay of the urban violence of the 1960s. Again, the statistics of the baby boom tell the story, for an estimated 42 million people will reach what is regarded as the "prime" home-buying age of 30 during the next decade. Even the Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates a shortfall of 2 million housing units in the 1980s. And the shortfall will be felt primarily by the poor and racial minorities in the inner cities.

The most important housing trend of the 1980s may be the surge in the purchase and rehabilitation of older houses in urban areas—a process called "gentrification." The trend began in the 1970s, appearing in cities from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco to Houston to Philadelphia. In a sense, gentrification is a free market version of urban renewal—but it has resulted in massive displacement of poor, largely minority residents who face a serious housing shortage already created by housing codes, zoning, rent control, and government-sponsored urban renewal. Some relocate to housing projects in the suburbs, while others search for urban housing as best they can.

Why are the young middle class moving back to the inner cities? In part because of new social trends. They have fewer children than the previous generation, spend more time away from home, and want to be "close to the action." They may even be motivated by concern for inner-city problems, which television brought forcefully to their attention when they were teenagers in the 1960s.

Of at least equal importance are economic considerations. Often, it is quite simply cheaper to buy and renovate a dilapidated inner-city house than to buy a home in the suburbs — thanks in part to the same suburban zoning restrictions which have kept low income people in the cities. Costs associated with commuting, such as gasoline, have skyrocketed, making a "close in" residence that much more attractive.

For the new urban gentry, the benefits of this trend have been significant and immediate. Entire sections of older cities, formerly thought of as dangerous ghettos, have taken on a new, trendy character, both residentially and commercially, as merchants flock in to serve the new demand for luxury items. But for the displaced poor and minorities, the trend is bitterly resented. As a former resident of "Old Town" Alexandria, Virginia (a gentrified community near Washington, D.C.) put it, "The white folks want the neighborhood and they don't want us around any more." In Washington, D.C. itself, many leaders of the black community view the new housing trend in explicitly racial terms, charging a white conspiracy to drive black people out of the city into suburban housing projects. White newcomers, for their part — even those whose political outlook can be described as "liberal chic" — talk openly of the not-so-distant day when the rehabilitation of their neighborhoods will drive the "undesirables" out of their immediate line of sight. With these racial attitudes clashing, what will prevent a return to the open conflict of the 1960s?

Dismantling the barriers

In fact, there should be no reason for the poor and minorities in Washington, D.C. — or in any other city experiencing similar housing trends — to feel they are the mistreated, displaced losers in a racially-motivated battle in which developers and entrepreneurs have the upper hand. The reasons shouldn't exist, but they presently do exist in the array of regulations governing urban housing. Cities should have low-income housing in abundance — except that governments at various levels have seen to it that a critical shortage of affordable housing has developed and remains.

- *They've seen to it through their insistence on complex* and fossilized building codes, which increase costs while at the same time discouraging less expensive innovations and substitutes in building materials, which are interpreted and enforced selectively on the basis of political clout, and which favor large, established construction firms which can afford to wait out lengthy permit procedures. Building codes should be replaced with private, legally enforceable homeowner warrantees which would hold builders liable for defects, and builders in turn could insure themselves in the same way that doctors and attorneys presently carry malpractice insurance.
- They've seen to it through a maze of zoning regulations which has constricted the supply of residential land and prohibited the construction of high-density, low-cost housing — not to mention making city governments a playground for corruption. Zoning laws should be replaced with private land use covenants, thus removing such decisions from the political arena — and in densely populated cities which have little or no vacant, developable land, zoning laws needn't be replaced with anything at all.
- They've seen to it through the disastrous federal program of urban renewal which, as noted previously, destroyed many more housing units than it created and discriminated heavily against the poor and minorities — but which nevertheless was welcomed by city governments, some of which continue to implement localized versions. As a government program, urban renewal is essentially dead; may its coffin be nailed shut permanently.
- They've seen to it through perhaps the most wrongheaded of all housing regulations, rent control, which has not only dried up new investment in the rental housing market but also has hastened the deterioration and destruction of existing rental housing, encouraged condominium conversion, and artificially stimulated the inner city gentrification trend. Rent control should be abolished; the only way to create a supply of decent, affordable rental housing is to allow people an incentive to build it, maintain it, and rent it.

Like inert chemicals which, when combined, set off an explosion, the combination of these housing market regulations with national demographic trends add up to social dynamite for the 1980s. The dynamite can be defused—but only by removing the power of political decision making from the issue of housing. ❑

Bruce Douglas Cooley is serving a Summer internship in *LR*'s West Coast office. In September he plans to return to his studies at Oberlin College in Ohio.

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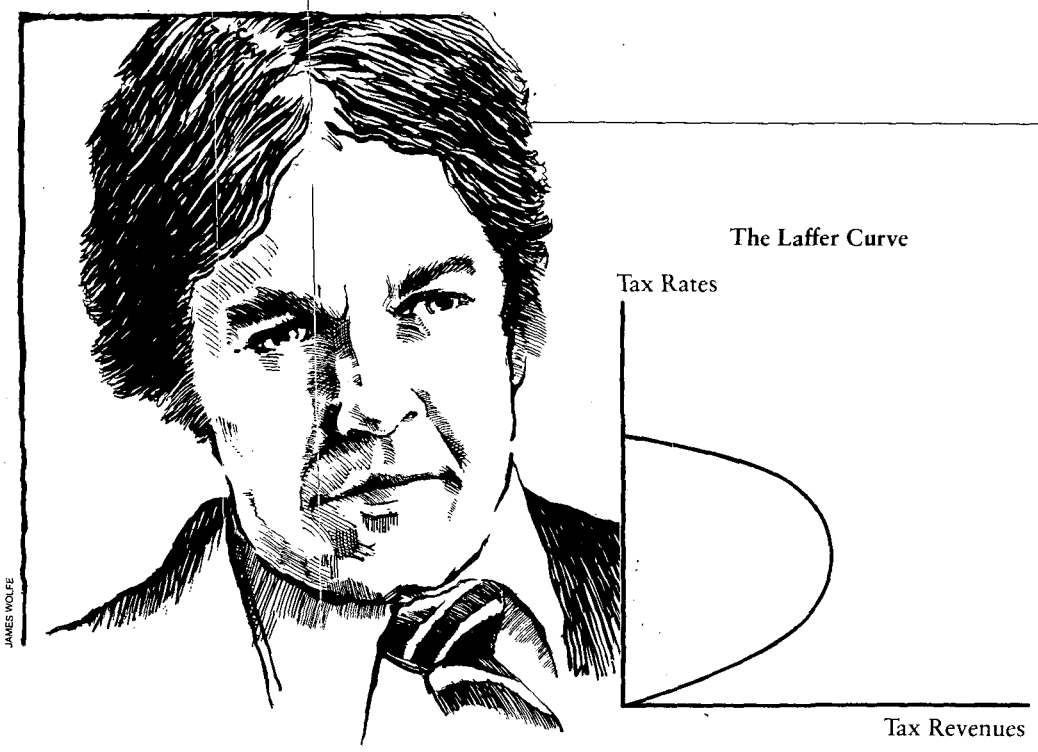
BOOKS AND ARTS



Supply-sider Arthur Laffer and his curve.

Book Reviews

A walk on the supply side

TYLER COWEN

Reaganomics: Supply-Side Economics in Action, *by Bruce Bartlett. Arlington House, Westport, Conn., 207 pp., $14.95.*

BRUCE BARTLETT'S *Reaganomics: Supply-Side Economics in Action* attempts to provide the most thorough, carefully reasoned, and well-documented case for supply-side economics to date. When viewed in these terms the book must be considered a success, for Bartlett expresses his ideas clearly and supports them with some fairly convincing evidence. This book will probably stand for quite some time as the standard reference on supply-side economics. When viewed in terms of a guide to economic theory and policy, however, *Reaganomics* is lacking in both substance and depth. Only a reader's natural sympathy for tax cuts prevents much of this book from appearing to be an extended series of apologetics for the Republican Party. Nonetheless, Bartlett has performed a valuable service for both the advocates and the critics of supply-side theory and policy. By making the strongest case possible for supply-side economics, he has laid out its strengths and weaknesses for all to see.

Bartlett clearly deserves to be classified as one of the "rational" supply-siders — à la Paul Craig Roberts — and not as one of the "mystical" supply-siders—George Gilder and Jude Wanniski. Say's Law and the Laffer Curve are not presented as the keys to unlocking the secrets of the universe, but rather as just some of the good, old-fashioned tools of economic theory. Absent are the wild discussions about sexuality, "potlatching," and the cosmos that characterize *Wealth and Poverty;* as well as the Wanniskiesque implication that the Laffer Curve is both a category of human action and the primary ruling force in human history.

To Bartlett, Say's Law and the Laffer Curve are perhaps the two most important ideas in economics. In his initial description of supply-side economics, Bartlett says: "In many respects, supply-side economics is nothing more than classical economics rediscovered. More particularly, it is Say's Law of Markets rediscovered. The essence of Say's Law, named for the great French economist Jean-Baptiste Say, is that goods are ultimately paid for with other goods. Thus it is production which limits the satisfaction of human wants, not the ability to consume."

The Laffer Curve, the second tool in the supply-side bag of tricks, implies that there are always two tax rates which will bring in the same amount of revenue. Either a high tax rate on a low tax base or a low tax rate on a high base yields the same amount of tax money. Hence—on the right-hand side of the curve—a cut in tax rates will increase tax revenue by creating incentives and broadening the tax base.

Most of the supply-side criticism of modern Keynesian economic theory is based upon these two principles. Keynesians treat "effective demand" — consumption + investment + government spending — as the chief determinant of macroeconomic activity, and government manipulation of these variables through monetary and fiscal policies is supposed to bring the economy to a state of full employment and to boost economic growth. The supply-siders object to this

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model because it does not focus enough attention on the economy's ability to produce an adequate *supply* of goods and services (hence the name *supply*-side economics). Say's Law implies that without a corresponding increase in production, any increase in demand can only result from an artificial stimulation of certain economic variables, such as the money supply. Tampering with the market process cannot increase productivity but will only create inflation.

The supply-side treatment of the issues of incentives and the Laffer Curve is also an important departure from the neoclassical-Keynesian orthodoxy. Neoclassical economists are unable to predict whether an increase in personal income tax rates will diminish an individual's work effort (the "substitution effect") because it is equally likely that his desire for a given income level will drive him to work even more (the "income effect"). Bartlett and other supply-siders argue that an increase in taxes definitely will decrease an individual's supply of labor. While the supply-siders have never been fully successful at refuting the neoclassical argument on theoretical grounds — Bartlett's attempt can be found on page 10 — the performance of the welfare state in the twentieth century would seem to indicate on empirical grounds that the supply-siders are right.

These criticisms of standard economic theory are basically well-taken and Bartlett also avoids many of the theoretical errors that other supply-siders have made. The most important of these is the now-common confusion between the ineffectiveness of government *management* of demand in promoting prosperity and the effectiveness of *market* demand in directing economic activity. The failure of the former does not imply the impotence of the latter.

Unfortunately, after reading Bartlett's summary of supply-side economics, one gets the peculiar feeling that there is precious little there besides Say's Law and the Laffer Curve. If supply-side economics ever wishes to succeed beyond the level of a few short-run policy victories, it needs to develop a fairly sophisticated body of economic theory. Its current failure to do so is one reason why it commands little respect in the academic community. If all supply-side economics consists of is cutting taxes and increasing productivity — as *Reaganomics* would seem to indicate — then it should stop parading as an independent school of economic thought and content itself with merely being an addendum or an improvement to be fitted into some other body of economic theory. The different visions of supply-side economics range from the more metaphysical (Gilder) to the more empirical (Bartlett). At Bartlett's end of the spectrum, there is much less to criticize but there is also much less being said.

Bartlett has performed a valuable service for both the advocates and critics of supply-side economics. By making the strongest case possible, he has laid out its strengths and weaknesses for all to see.

After Bartlett's first chapter tells us what supply-side economics is, he spends several chapters showing us exactly how high marginal tax rates are and what their effect has been on production. Bartlett correctly treats welfare payments as the economic equivalent of a high marginal tax rate in kind, for any effort the welfare recipient makes to earn income will deprive him of welfare benefits. For instance, a worker capable of either earning $10,000 in the labor market or receiving $8,000 in welfare is facing an effective marginal tax rate of 80 percent since his $10,000 job will only yield a real increase of $2,000 in income.

These chapters are filled with charts and diagrams giving information about our current tax system — perhaps the book's most useful feature. There are different sections on the progressivity of tax rates, the inflationary phenomenon of "bracket creep," the underground economy, and regional growth and decline. In several instances, Bartlett's analysis goes far beyond what one would expect from a current book on economic policy bearing Ronald Reagan's name. There is an entire chapter attacking econometrics from a somewhat "Austrian" point of view. In several other places, Bartlett makes some excellent points about war and militarism — "Historically, tax systems come into being during wartime. The enormous war-spawned revenue demands of government can only be met by unprecedented tax rates on all citizens;" and: "[World War I] not only led to a vast increase in tax rates but made the income tax an institution. As Gerald Carson put it: 'World War I built an acceptance for the income tax that would probably never have occurred otherwise, since paying soon became an act of patriotism.'"

In spite of the book's good points, there are strong middle-of-the-road and sometimes statist tendencies within *Reaganomics*. Bartlett criticizes all those who "... argue against tax cuts because they are inflationary or who demand matching spending cuts. ..." Now, while it is true that a tax cut with no corresponding cut in spending may be better than no tax cut at all, one should not go as far as Bartlett, who argues that "deficits *per se* are not harmful to the economy." This is true only in a narrow, almost absurd sense, and is equivalent to arguing, "Printing paper money, *per se*, isn't harmful. It's only harmful when the government puts it into circulation."

In his section on work and welfare, Bartlett proclaims his desire to develop "... a social welfare system which aids the truly needy while providing the maximum incentive to work. ..." Later on in the chapter he endorses David Stockman's guaranteed-annual-income-for-children plan as a means for achieving this end.

No matter how anti-interventionist Bartlett may try to be, like most other supply-siders he can scarcely resist sounding gleeful about the realization that a tax cut may result in increased government revenue. At first, Bartlett is rather subdued about this particular point, only noting that a cut in marginal tax rates would bring the underground economy into the taxable sector, but later on he is proudly parading the fact that the tax cuts of the 1920s actually increased the government's intake of cash, and he says elsewhere that "...Hong Kong is an almost perfect example of the Laffer Curve in action — low tax rates generate high rates of real economic growth, *leading to increased revenues* which can be used for social welfare...." (emphasis added)

The second half of *Reaganomics* is devoted to an economic history of supply-side economics, both in America and abroad. Bartlett starts with the Harding-Mellon tax cuts of the 1920s, takes us through to the Carter administration, and then looks at the experience of such foreign countries as Great Britain, Hong Kong, and Puerto Rico.

Like many historical analysts, Bartlett sees the twentieth century as a struggle between two opposing "forces" or principles. However, rather than viewing the conflict as

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"liberty vs. power" as a libertarian would, Bartlett sees the titanic issue of modern American history as being the Republican party vs. the Democratic party! This belief is described in detail in Chapter 14, where Bartlett says: "The thesis and antithesis of our political system are embodied in the philosophies of the two major political parties. For most of this century the Democrats won their elections and established the dominant thesis of our political system with ever-increasing government spending." The Republican party, on the other hand, has "...clearly reestablished [itself] as the party of tax reduction..." and thus claimed its rightful place in history. *Reaganomics* does contain chapters on Harding and Coolidge (both Republicans) but, strangely enough, there is no real discussion of Nixon and Ford, our two most recent previous Republican Presidents, each of whom incurred record deficits and increased government spending at a breakneck pace.

Bartlett's book does contain historical fallacies. For instance, he proclaims, "Until the Depression, the dominant thesis in the American political system was one of laissez-faire. This did not mean that the government stayed entirely out of the economy, merely that when there was doubt about what the government should do, it tended to do nothing. Therefore, when the Depression hit and there was no clear-cut way to respond to it, the government did nothing (or at least gave the appearance of doing nothing)." For a refutation of the myth of pre-Depression laissez-faire, see Jonathan Hughes's *The Governmental Habit,* and for an outline of Hoover's interventionist reaction to the Depression see Murray Rothbard's *America's Great Depression.* Bartlett also claims that the boom of the 1920s was caused by Andrew Mellon's tax cuts rather than by the continual supply of artificially-created credit which the Federal Reserve pumped into the loan market during those years. For a correct analysis of the inflation of the '20s, see Lionel Robbins's *The Great Depression* and *Banking and the Business Cycle* by Phillips, McManus, and Nelson, as well as the aforementioned Rothbard book. Almost all of Bartlett's analysis suffers from the general flaw of almost completely disregarding monetary policy. Not only do supply-siders have many of the strengths of the classical economists, but they also have many of their weaknesses—including an inadequate appreciation for the importance of monetary policy and theory. The supply-side explanation of America's declining productivity gives too small a role to inflation.

In the last chapter of *Reaganomics,* Bartlett outlines his plan for reform of the American economy. He calls for a "... radical reduction in the overall burden of government," but this reduction seems more gradualist than radical as it includes only an indexation of the tax code, an across-the-board cut in tax rates, a cap on government spending, and a reduction of government regulations. Bartlett shows considerable insight, however, when he warns us, "The greatest challenge of the 1980s will be to prevent supply-side economics from being perverted into an industrial policy, which would substitute government subsidies and tariffs for tax reduction or regulatory reform and put the United States on the road to centralized economic planning."

Unfortunately, this may be exactly where we are headed under the Reagan administration, despite the title of Bartlett's book, a title which is particularly curious because he makes little attempt to tie Reagan in with supply-side economics. In fact, the manuscript was written before Reagan was elected and had previously gone through at least two titles —*Supply-Side Economics* and the clever *Take a Walk on the Supply Side.*

Although many of the people employed in the Reagan administration are supply-siders, it is clear that Reagan is not. One chink in Reagan's armor is his commitment to massive increases for the defense budget.

Although many of the people employed in the Reagan administration, or Congress (Bartlett is deputy director of the Joint Economic Committee), may be consistent supply-siders, it is clear that Reagan is not. One chink in Reagan's supply-side armor is his fervent commitment to a sizable increase in the defense establishment, an area which diverts more capital, more research and development money, and more scientists from the private sector than any other government intervention. In 1974, for instance, the total value of all military materiel and installations was $214 billion, 38 percent of the total assets of all American manufacturing corporations. Since World War II, the American economy has spent over $200 billion on research and development, *80 percent* of which has gone into either defense, space, or the Atomic Energy Commission! Is it any mystery that we are experiencing a productivity slowdown?

In spite of these facts, the Reagan administration proposes to increase defense spending over the next three years by an amount *greater than the entire defense budget of 1978.* This year the Pentagon will spend $163 billion—by 1984 they will be spending $267 billion. It is interesting to note that Reagan's entire proposed domestic budget cut could be swallowed up and regurgitated whole by one quarter's unexpected price escalation for the Pentagon's weapons systems ($47.6 billion in the last quarter of 1980). In fact, the prices for military goods are rising 50 percent faster than the underlying rate of inflation.

There is absolutely no protest over the "military-industrial complex" in *Reaganomics.* Bartlett's only mention of the topic comes when he says, "...it is (not) clear that an increase in already unprecedented tax levels will leave us with an economy strong enough to fend off the Soviets ...a strong economy is critical to a strong defense. Fortunately for the Republican Party, its nominee for President of the United States in 1980, Ronald Reagan, understands the need for tax cuts and a strong defense."

Another of Reagan's retreats from supply-side economics came when he reneged on his campaign promise that tax reduction would begin on January 1, 1981 and pushed the date back to July 1, 1981, over concern for "revenue loss." Reagan also overruled a Treasury-OMB proposal to immediately drop the 70 percent top tax rate on dividends and interest to 50 percent. The Kemp-Roth plan endorsed by Reagan would accomplish this goal only after three years.

Even if President Reagan's currently proposed tax plan escapes Congress unscathed, the mild change in marginal tax rates it would bring is unlikely to mean any significant tax relief at all. After accounting for inflation, the marginal tax rate for a median-income family of four will fall by only one percentage point (to 23 percent) between 1980 and 1984. For a family of four earning half the median income, the

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marginal rate would drop to 15 percent, only one point lower than the 1979 rate. And a family of four receiving two incomes of $22,500 and $40,000 would experience no drop in marginal rates at all! Neither the $1,000 personal exemption nor the zero bracket amount—the equivalent of the former standard deduction — will be increased, while their value will be eroded by at least 35 percent in four years due to inflation. Low-income families on a $7,500 income will actually see their marginal tax rates *go up* 15 percentage points because their earned income credit will decline as their income rises.

Both the theory and the practice of supply-side economics are seriously flawed. They are, however, a major improvement over the Keynesian paradigm which has dominated economic theory and policy since the 1930s, and Bartlett is to be commended for writing a guide to the recent "supply-side mania." Nonetheless, *Reaganomics* suffers both from a shallowness of historical insight and from an excessively cautious stance — or even silence—on many important issues, issues which contradict and are likely to torpedo the confident predictions and projections of the supply-siders.

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Nuclear power and market

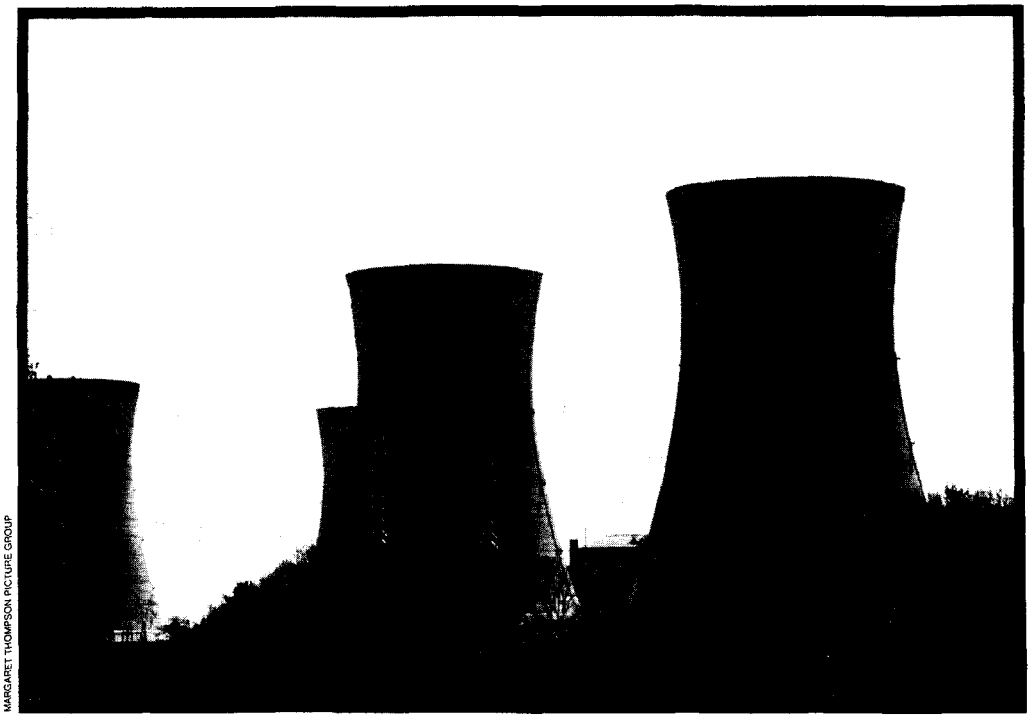
BILL BIRMINGHAM

Energy/War: Breaking the Nuclear Link, *by Amory B. Lovins and L. Hunter Lovins. Friends of the Earth, 161 pp., $10.00.*

WHAT, ONE MAY ASK, IS Friends of the Earth doing publishing a book on nuclear proliferation? The answer should be obvious. No human activity is as destructive to the environment as a nuclear war would be. Ten years ago environmentalists fought the proposed American supersonic transport as a threat to the earth's ozone layer; a fleet of SSTs, they argued, would destroy as much as one percent of the ozone, with disastrous ecological effects. By comparison, recent studies by the National Academy of Sciences and others suggest that an all-out nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the Soviet Union would destroy from 30 to 50 percent of the Northern Hemisphere's ozone, frying half the world with ultraviolet rays. Nor would that be the only effect on the ecosystem; such radiation-resistant species as rats and cockroaches, for example, might multiply, unchecked by more vulnerable predators. Such devastation would swell the human death toll as well. Total deaths could run as high as *one billion* — a figure to horrify even those mythical "ecofreaks" who prefer snail darters to people. As long as they share a planet with the hydrogen bomb, human beings, too, are an endangered species.

Although it has been deliberately forgotten, the so-called "peaceful atom" is in fact the child of the atom bomb. (See, for example, Milton Mueller, "Nuclear Power and Nuclear Proliferation," *Libertarian Review,* July/August 1979.) In this book, Amory and Hunter Lovins argue that this works both ways: "If, as Samuel Butler said, 'the hen is only an egg's way of making another egg,' then perhaps a reactor is a bomb's way of making another bomb." One can make a Nagasaki-size bomb with just a few kilograms of plutonium—and a large commercial nuclear reactor produces hundreds of kilograms a year. A fuel-reprocessing plant to get the plutonium is cheap ("tens of millions of dollars") and relatively easy to build. "Separation of plutonium from spent fuel preceded and facilitated the British, French and Indian decisions to build bombs," the authors point out, and other countries with reactors could do the same. They could even follow the Israeli (and South African?) precedent and build their bombs secretly. Plutonium is so difficult to measure that the owners of a typical, commercial reactor could divert a few bombs' worth each year and no one would ever miss it. "World nuclear power over the next two decades could produce over two thousand tons of plutonium. A mere half of one percent of this figure—about half of the ideal or a quarter of the currently typical imprecision of inventory in spent fuel entering a reprocessing plant — would suffice to make thousands of bombs."

Nuclear power not only proliferates bomb materials, it also proliferates bomb technology. "Such data as the criticality conditions and equations of state of plutonium are secret when applied to bombs," say the authors, "yet precisely the same data are published in civilian literature which reactor programs make available to proliferators." The United States government, in its wisdom, has passed this knowledge on to thousands of scientists from 84 countries, including Argentina, Taiwan, South Korea, and India. "Probably half the key staff of the Indian bomb program was U.S.-trained at the expense of U.S. taxpayers." And "even today," the authors assert, "disproportionate numbers of



MARGARET THOMPSON PICTURE GROUP

"If, as Samuel Butler said, 'the hen is only an egg's way of making another egg,' then perhaps a reactor is a bomb's way of making another bomb."

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Libyan and Palestinian students are showing disproportionate interest in U.S. nuclear curricula." These people —like Dr. Bhabha and his colleagues in the Indian nuclear program — can form a constituency for bomb-building and pressure their nominal superiors into a weapons program under some pretext or another ("peaceful nuclear explosions" was the pretext in India). Nuclear bureaucrats are no easier to control than the conventional variety. "In both Britain and France," it seems, "the formal decision to build a bomb was taken after the apparently unstoppable technologists were nearly through doing so on their own." As the Lovinses put it: "Politicians come and go, bureaucracies stay and grow."

With this in mind it's easy to see that the chief argument of nuclear propagandists — that there are, after all, other ways to make a bomb than with plutonium from a commercial, pressurized light-water reactor — is quite beside the point. "With trivial exceptions ... *every* known civilian route to bombs involves *either* nuclear power *or* materials and technologies whose possession, indeed whose existence in commerce, is a *direct and essential consequence* of nuclear fission power." Conversely, if nuclear power did not exist, these materials and technologies would be much harder to obtain. Further, "efforts to obtain them... would be *unambiguously military* in intent"—and therefore far less attractive politically, and easier to prevent.

Here is a cost of nuclear power that far exceeds those usually cited. Suppose, the Lovinses argue, that the probability of a nuclear war in the next 30 years killing one billion people is currently 10 percent. This is probably conservative; former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Thomas Watson recently predicted nuclear war "in the next two or three decades" unless the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. change their ways. (*San Francisco Chronicle*, February 9, 1981) If proliferation caused by nuclear power increased that probability to 11 percent, that works out to 10,000 to 20,000 deaths per quad (one quadrillion BTUs; about 200,000 barrels of oil) of nuclear energy. This is hundreds of thousands of times greater than the expected toll from reactor accidents (tens of thousands, if you still believe the Rasmussen Report). In principle, one could make the nuclear industry bear the full cost of nuclear accidents — though you'd have to repeal the infamous Price-Anderson Act first. But the far greater costs of nuclear proliferation are what the economists call "externalities," and are borne by the public at large — by everyone.

"Nearly every civilian route to bombs involves either nuclear power or materials that exist because of nuclear power."

At first glance this external-costs argument would seem to prove that the marketplace cannot save us from nuclear proliferation, and we must turn to government and (ugh) bureaucrats to "denuclearize" society. But that turns out not to be the case. There are clear indications that the nuclear industry's woes are due to technical, not regulatory, causes. "Universally — in the United States and in the Soviet Union, in France and in Brazil, under the most diverse conditions of regulation and economic policy—the direct economic costs of nuclear power in real terms (corrected for general inflation) have risen unrelentingly since reactors went commercial." In the U.S., capital costs of nuclear power plants have been increasing more than twice as fast as those of coal-fired plants (despite the cost of anti-pollution equipment), and now cost 50 percent more per kilowatt of generating capacity. U.S. nuclear plants, however, only operate at about 61 percent of full capacity (plants larger than 800 megawatts can only manage 55 percent). The figures are about the same, or worse, elsewhere in the world; Japanese reactors run at 51 percent of capacity, and French reactors, at 49 percent—even though the French government is perhaps the most rabidly pro-nuclear in the world.

Although nuclear propagandists never tire of scapegoating government regulation, they are less eager to talk about the nuclear industry's history of massive government subsidies. "A preliminary survey of Federal subsidies to nuclear power," say the authors, "identified about twenty categories of subsidy, of which several had effectively infinite value (the industry could not exist without them), most were unquantifiable, and three which were quantifiable were together enough to reduce the apparent price of nuclear electricity by more than half." Nuclear power is collapsing not because of government intervention but in spite of it: "the victim of an incurable attack of market forces."

But don't we "need" nuclear power? James Edwards, the ex-dentist whom Reagan appointed Secretary of Energy, claims the country's energy needs will increase 68 percent by the year 2000 and "there's no place to turn" but to nukes. The Secretary, however, is considerably behind the times. A prediction of 68 percent growth in energy consumption is equivalent to 125 quads per year in 2000. The Lovinses' tables show that this prediction, which might have been reasonable five years ago, is the rankest superstition today. Indeed, the DOE's own Solar Energy Research Institute recently forecast year-2000 consumption at 55 quads per year, indicating that Edwards's figure is too extreme to class even as superstition, but belongs in a new category ("The Fever Swamps"?). *It is worth* pointing out, by the way, that for nuclear power to meet even a quarter of this absurdly large demand we would have to order a new, large reactor *every five days* and spend "at least three-quarters of all discretionary investment in the entire U.S. economy." (Those are the figures the Lovinses offer for a 114 quad demand, and are therefore doubly conservative.) Even if we did need that much energy, nuclear power couldn't give it to us.

Furthermore, nuclear power is the *wrong kind* of energy. Most energy is used to produce heat—mainly at relatively low temperatures—for space heating and industrial processes, or, in the form of liquid fuels, for transportation. Motors, lights, smelters, and other applications which *have* to have electricity make up only 7 or 8 percent of all energy needs. "In most industrial countries, therefore, a third to a half of all electricity generated is already being used, uneconomically, for low-temperature heating and cooling — space-conditioning buildings and heating water. Additional electricity could *only* be so used." Instead of building nuclear (or coal) power plants, say the authors, it would be cheaper to spend the money on using electricity more efficiently—what used to be called conservation, before we were taught to equate the term with freezing-in-the-dark — and on solar heat. "Indeed, because these measures, intelligently done, generally cost less than the running cost *alone* for a nuclear plant, a nation that has just built such a plant would probably save money by writing it off and never operating it." With such expedients as wind power, industrial cogeneration (making electricity as a byproduct of industrial process heat: cogeneration potential is estimated to be the equivalent of two

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hundred nuclear reactors), small-scale hydroelectricity, and other features of the "soft energy path," the Lovinses estimate that nuclear power could be phased out within the decade—by free market forces alone.

The authors propose a variety of reforms to cure various "market imperfections" and smooth out the soft path. Most would warm the heart of any libertarian: deregulate energy prices, end price and production subsidies, repeal zoning barriers to wind and solar energy, make utility commissions allow cogenerators to sell their surplus electricity, etc. The authors are scornful of government anti-solar propaganda, such as the claim, found in federal publications until recently, that "passive solar" techniques could not be used to heat existing structures; "some fifty thousand householders who didn't know that were meanwhile building passive solar greenhouses onto their homes, in which they now bask in February munching fresh tomatoes and reflecting on the infirmities of government." A few "reforms," however, miss the point. "Why should a landlord retrofit a building whose tenants pay the utilities, or a cab company fix an inefficient taxi whose driver buys the gasoline?" The Lovinses suggest that some government intervention may be necessary in such cases. But market forces would suffice here as well as if tenants and drivers were free to go elsewhere. The best thing to do for the tenant is not to modify rent control laws (as the authors suggest) but to abolish them and all the other government depredations that restrict the supply of housing and permit landlords to get rich renting energy sieves. Such lapses are minor, and anyway the authors by their own admission are interested in "technical fixes" rather than the tithe of the tithe of free market rectitude. But there are several places where their arguments could have been improved by a dose of 190-proof libertarianism.

One such place is the chapter on nuclear disarmament. The authors score the nuclear powers for piously denouncing proliferation even as they add to their own nuclear stockpiles, and propose the usual disarmament initiatives (mutual force reductions, test bans, etc.). But for "the key missing ingredient... promoting a psychological climate of denuclearization," the best they can do is suggest that leaders of the nuclear powers "frequently, publicly, prominently, and sincerely ... regret their possession of bombs, emphasize the insecurity that bombs bring, and pray for their speedy elimination." Technical fixes are all very well, but we need more than prayer wheels, even wind-powered ones. What we need is a *non-interventionist foreign policy,* one which does not depend on nuclear sabre-rattling to counter foreign "threats." The authors deplore "NATO's continued emphasis on forward nuclear deployment," but fail to realize that, as Earl Ravenal pointed out in the April 1981 *LR,* this is implicit in the very concept of regional defense. It is also worth pointing out, as the Center for Defense Information recently did, that military reactors produce most of this country's nuclear waste. As long as U.S. policy rests on the nuclear ships and subs of the "blue-water Navy," it can hardly be otherwise.

Nuclear power and nuclear weapons are branches of a tree with a single root: government intervention, at home and abroad. Our current rulers claim to oppose government intervention but subsidize the breeder reactor (and promote nuclear power in their official statements) and arm to the teeth to defend the American Empire. "To abandon nuclear power and its ancillary technologies," declare the authors, "does not require any government to embrace anti-nuclear sentiment or rhetoric. It can love nuclear power — provided it loves the market more." But how much longer must we wait?

Bill Birmingham is a contributing editor of *LR*.

UNITED ARTISTS

Zeus (Laurence Olivier) "sitting on his throne radiating light and giving off overwhelmingly illogical explanations of his pettiness" in the Clash of the Titans.

On View
Brainstorms

DAVID BRUDNOY

IT MUST HAVE SEEMED A swell idea, the day somebody decided to remake *King Kong;* even sweller when, buoyed by its enthusiasm for the maker of *The Deer Hunter,* United Artists decided to write a blank check for Michael Cimino to do as he wished and spend what he wanted for *Heaven's Gate;* not to mention the giddy whoosh that came over the wizards who sat down one day and concocted a live-action *Popeye* starring a burnt-out case from television. How Lord Grade must have trembled with anticipation imagining the revenue that would roll in from a zillion-dollar extravaganza called *Raise the Titanic,* and think of the merriment in corporate suites all over Hollywood when the accountants began computing

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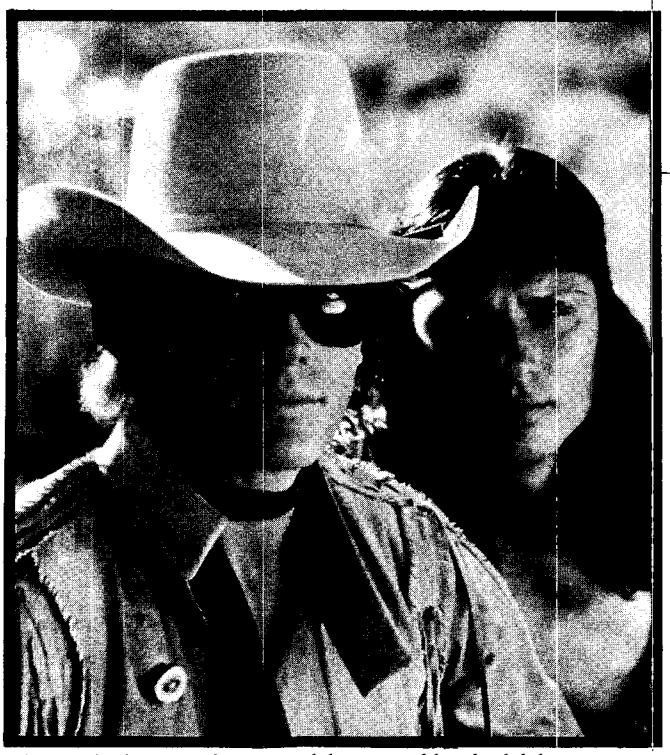

The masked man (Klinton Spilsbury) and his faithful companion Tonto (Michael Horse) in The Legend of the Lone Ranger.

the likely windfall to come from a feature-length movie of *Star Trek,* with most of the original TV cast members resurrected for the ride. All of these ideas were theoretically nifty, *brainstorms,* surefire bonanzas; that they all turned to dross, well, them's the breaks. Big budget and lean, remakes and originals, star-studded and star-making — think of Otto Preminger scouring the land for his Joan of Arc and coming up with Jean Seberg! — the pitfalls are everywhere; the trail of disasters, as long as the yellow brick road of *The Wiz.* Herewith, the latest crop of brainstorms that ought to have been lobotomized.

Clash of the Titans

When better Olympuses are made, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer probably won't make them, not if *Clash of the Titans* is any indication. Not that the venerable Ray Harryhausen can be faulted for his fine special effects: his Pegasus with white wings flapping; his Medusa whose stare can kill a man, even when her head is not so delicately removed from her body; his Bubo the mechanical owl, a comical cousin to R2-D2; his sightless Stygian witches and ravenous sea-beasts; the works. As a marvel of the art of integrating live action with miniaturized thingies, *Clash* delivers what it promises. It is its gods and mere mortals who ruin this tale of Perseus and Andromeda as lovers and as playthings of the divinities. It is ineptitude in those who should be convincing as the focus of romance, and archness, enough to construct the Coliseum, in the demeanor of the veterans who fret and fuss on Olympus, that set our teeth on edge. It is, to be blunt, atrocious acting and a script that makes you want to hide under the seat that put this *Clash of the Titans* in the category of all-time cinema catastrophes.

The story. Zeus (Laurence Olivier) and Thetis (Maggie Smith) are at it again, squabbling over their favorites on earth. Hera (Claire Bloom) is more or less accustomed to Zeus's shenanigans but Aphrodite (Ursula Andress) is looking super and wouldn't really object to a little mischief. In fact, the immortals, being eternal, and thus, presumably, eternally prone to boredom, never tire of this sort of thing. Which gives us one of Zeus's favorites among the mortals, dashing young Perseus (Harry Hamlin), whom Zeus bestows with gifts, among them the helmet to permit the lad to become invisible. As such, he travels to the boudoir of Andromeda (Judi Bowker) and falls instantly into love, whence flows the conflict, since to get the girl, the boy has to lift the curse inflicted by Calibos, which means combatting the kraken (one of those dreadful items from the sea) with a more powerful force. The three blind witches suggest the head of Medusa and away we go.

You may have guessed already how it all turns out. But to get to the happy ending we must endure two hours of bombast from the gods and scurrying around by poor lovesick Perseus. Lord Olivier is found now and again sitting on his throne radiating light and giving off overwhelmingly illogical explanations of his pettiness. This is burdensome enough. But even the full complexity of intra-Olympian rivalry is as nothing in its deadening effect on the audience compared to the awkwardness of the earthlings. Harry Hamlin is a fleshy, quite voluptuous fellow who, when dressed in twentieth-century clothes for *Movie, Movie* and allowed to be awkwardly engaging, succeeded quite nicely. Here he has been obliged to embody High Seriousness and to undergo many torments; he accomplishes the former by knitting his brow and the latter by writhing and permitting a bit of grime to soil his minitoga. As Perseus, in short, Mr. Hamlin is to be seen and not heard, though we hear all too much of him, the worst of it when he is engaged in making nice to Miss Bowker, an Andromeda fit for a Shaun Cassidy. Harry Hamlin and Judi Bowker set off no sparks; they barely suggest a flickering candle of affection, so impossibly unglamorous is she — she's flawless but has none of the sexiness that Mr. Hamlin's real-life lady friend, the mature Miss Andress, has in abundance — and so resolutely heroic and self-righteous is he. The youthful leads are exquisite but empty, the immortals are all strut and no conviction, and save for Burgess Meredith, as Perseus's pixieish buddy Ammon, there is not a significant performance in the film that isn't either wisp-thin or congealed.

Clash of the Titans will delight children, at least those who aren't jaded owing to the excellent special effects of the *Star Wars* movies, but its effect on adults can only be profoundly depressing. We watch a galaxy of well-known performers and two attractive newcomers taking second place to Ray Harryhausen's delicious tricks. Here, surely, is a film that could as well—better, actually — have been assigned to Ralph Bakshi to do with cartoons and some discrete rotoscoping. *Clash of the Titans* emerges as a tussle of midgets.

The Legend of the Lone Ranger

Any saga of this title that takes more than an hour to get the hero into his mask is in trouble. When, in the mask, he looks as if he's headed for a western-garb disco on the Upper East Side, it's in very serious trouble indeed. Lord Grade is back at it, "presenting" again, but to pin the blame closer to home, know that Walter Coblenz produced and William A. Fraker directed it, Jason Robards popped into it for ten minutes to lend it some class as President Ulysses S. Grant, and two exceptionally green actors named Klinton Spilsbury and Michael Horse were discovered somewhere to do the honors as John Reid, a.k.a. the Lone Ranger, and his faithful Indian companion, Tonto. Mr. Horse has been employed no doubt in order to recompense the entire Indian population of these United States for decades of "ugh, kemosabe" Tontos, and if he sounds as if he had just taken a first in Classics at Oxford, never mind; *all* the Indians speak absolutely splendid English, each is more saintly than the next, and Mr. Horse can surely donate a portion of his earnings from this one to some worthy Indian cause before setting off on his inevitable career as a model for *Gentlemen's Quarterly.*

Mr. Spilsbury is saddled not only with a name that, at least

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insofar as he will be known in films forevermore because of this western dud, is too appropriate by half, he also evidently has a voice that is so at odds with his appearance that much of his dialogue required dubbing by somebody else. He is surely the most debonair and attractive Lone Ranger ever brought to life on a screen of any size, so attractive, in fact, and so much Nature's imp in his moments of frolic with Tonto, that inappropriate thoughts about these two rush to mind. *The Legend of the Lone Ranger* brings closer to the surface than its makers must have wanted a certain speculation about just what the masked man and his buddy are up to when they're not rescuing President Grant.

As a spoof it would be, or at least could very possibly be, a hoot. All those snickering jokes we as smart-ass kids used to make about Batman and Robin and the Lone Ranger and Tonto: why not? But this is *not* intended as a put-on; it is an awesomely reverential movie, with a rhymed narration, no less, to keep us ever mindful of the thrill we are experiencing in seeing a classic tale brought to us anew. Much attention has been paid to establishing Reid's motivations for going into his mask, and for those who've forgotten how and why the Indian and his kemosabe (trusted friend) fell in with each other, we are handed the information in a nice, albeit gory, prologue set in 1854 when our heroes were boys. Moreover, the look of the picture is right: New Mexico, Utah, and Nevada landscape passes quite well for Hollywood's Texas. And we have a nicely nasty villain, one Cavendish, a disgraced Union officer, who kidnaps President Grant in order to get the United States to cede him the West for his own country. Also in its favor are the dramatic rescue scenes, one of Tonto by the masked man, the other of Grant by our dynamic duo. Perhaps if the movie were in Urdu or Farsi or Finnish, some language none of us knows, and subtitled, it might have worked. Maybe the languidness of Mr. Spilsbury wouldn't then have been quite so obvious. I don't know what could have saved *Legend* other than different stars, faster pacing, less explanatory material, and a new script.

Probably nothing could rescue a movie from catastrophe when those who construct it find not one but two people who look like gigolos and can't act and then entrust them with the task of embodying two of the most revered heroes in American popular fiction. It is rather as if a new adventure of Sherlock Holmes were to be filmed, in all seriousness, starring Christopher Atkins *(The Blue Lagoon)* as Holmes and David Bowie as Watson. Are American audiences so starved for beauty on the screen that Hollywood thinks we'll take just *anybody* as any character whatsoever?

Just a Gigolo

Speaking of David Bowie, who *can* act and has acted very well in films and as the title character in *The Elephant Man* on Broadway, somebody had another brainstorm that wasn't so hot after all, and Bowie found himself caught in the crossfire. If *Cabaret* didn't exhaust your appetite for the 1920's German decadence and here come the Nazis routine, most likely nothing ever will. Certainly not *Just a Gigolo,* of which it can be said that everything, *everything,* from the opening credits to the last idiotic vignette, is abominable. How, you ask, can the opening credits be abominable? Let me tell you. When we are run through the list of stars (of whom I'll have more to say shortly) and are then stopped in our tracks by "And with pride, Marlene Dietrich," isn't enough said to prove the point? With *whose* pride? Director-actor David Hemmings's? If so, isn't he also proud to have Bowie star, and Kim Novak, still scrumptious, co-star, and Curt Jurgens do his Curt Jurgens number, and Maria Schell all dumplingditsy as Bowie's mom? If he's proud because he got Dietrich back into films after 18 years, doesn't he owe her a role that isn't a towering embarrassment? Or if Marlene Dietrich is the one who is "with pride," of what is she proud? That she woodenly plays the Baroness Von Semering, doyenne of the gigolos, and sings a song which is also the title of the movie, though she's not a gigolo and the words she sings, off-key, of course, should be sung by one who is? Or is she proud that she . . . but there is no point in further speculation about the opening credits; they are only, for starters, what Mr. Hemmings has done badly in his capacity as director.

Bowie plays Paul, who is thought to have been killed in the war. When he returns, alive and well, everybody, especially his mother, regards him as somehow a bad boy for having lived. Paul falls into menial jobs and is a target for recruitment by Captain Kraft (Hemmings), a Nazi, but instead of going that route he becomes just a gigolo — ah ha — after having bedded Helga (Kim Novak) in a cemetery when her husband's funeral is interrupted by street fighting, and after having lost his Cilly (Sydne Rome), a lower class girl who goes to Hollywood and becomes a star. I won't tell you who is killed at the end and turned, perversely, into a Nazi martyr, but your guess will probably be right.

Everything fizzles in this bit of nonsense. All the actors, supposedly playing Germans, speak in different accents. Hemmings and Bowie are very British, the Germans very German, Novak sounds as if she had been taking voice lessons from Barbara Walters but then tried to forget what she learned, and Miss Rome sounds as if she had done five seasons of summer stock in Detroit, which she very well may have. Dubbing here and there, unsynchronized and quite obviously so, merely adds to the surrealist feeling the movie gives off. Once in a while a little joke relieves the deathly pall that hangs over this like a vulture in Death Valley, though sometimes the jokes are quite unintentional, as when Jurgens, as a Prince, says to Captain Kraft, the Nazi: "By the way, a friend of yours from Munich is in the next room. Maybe you would like to talk to him." My hopes soared. Will Gregory Peck (later to be credited at the end as having appeared "with pride") come upon us as Adolf Hitler? My hopes were dashed as, throughout the movie, every actor overdid his or her part, not, as in Miss Novak's parodic appearance in *The Mirror Crack'd* last year, for a touch of camp, but because they — Novak, Jurgens, Dietrich, all of them — either thought that what they were doing was acting or because David Hemmings is hopeless as a director. Only Bowie survives, relatively unscathed by the idiocy of *Just a Gigolo.* Oh, he has as many stupid things to say as the rest, but he has a nicely glazed look about him, as if he were quite energetically willing himself into a different time and place as he went through his paces for Mr. Hemmings. Bowie has just the right sheen as the would-be decadent Prussian young man, willing to be, as he says, "a gigolo but not a whore"; and since Hemmings decided that Dietrich, who can no longer sing, or talk-sing, should do the singing, or talk-singing, and that Bowie, who can sing brilliantly, shouldn't, probably Bowie decided that if that's the way it was going to be, he would just take the money and run.

Which (though from, not to *Just a Gigolo*) is what I would do, knowing now what I didn't know at the time I subjected myself to this particular brainstorm turned comatose.

***LR*'s film critic also reviews for WNAC-TV (CBS), WRKO-AM (ABC), and *The Boston Herald American*. He hosts "The David Brudnoy Show" on radio and "Nightscene" on television, writes a nationally syndicated newspaper column, reviews books and restaurants, and lectures frequently on popular culture and politics.**
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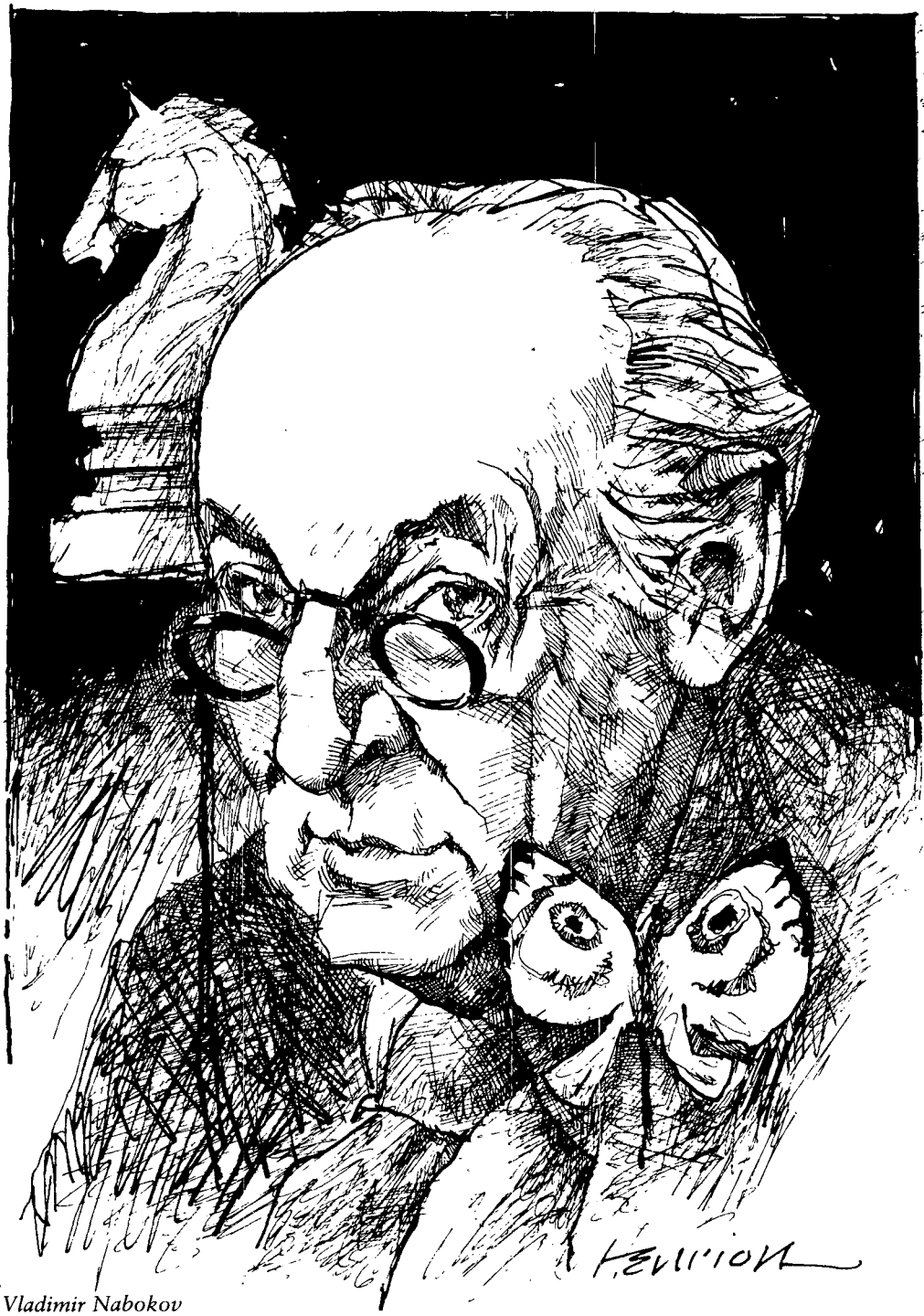

Vladimir Nabokov

The National Letters

On literary nationalism

JEFF RIGGENBACH

"NATIONALISM," SAID ALbert Einstein, "is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind." "All nationalism," said Rudolf Rocker, "is reactionary in its nature.... In this respect, so-called 'cultural nationalism' does not differ at all from political nationalism, for whose political purposes as a rule it serves as a fig leaf." "The spirit of nationalism," said Thorstein Veblen, "has never ceased to bend human institutions to the service of dissension and distress."

I beg to differ; or, at least, to redefine. "Nationalism" is ordinarily taken to mean a fierce devotion to the political and economic system and other social institutions of some particular nation, often coupled with a desire that the favored nation should conquer all other nations militarily, and always coupled with a degree of indifference or even hostility to the political and economic systems and other social institutions of other nations. But it is surely unnecessary to hate and fear other nations just because one loves one's own. And it is equally unnecessary to desire the forcible conversion of other peoples to one's own way of life, just because one's own way of life suits one to a tee. Nor is it necessary to cultivate ignorance of other countries or to affect indifference to them, just because one chooses to boost one's own.

Yet if one does tirelessly revel in one's own national culture, if one does tirelessly promote it as a wholly unique thing of great and irreplaceable worth —what is one but a nationalist, even if one also revels in other national cultures? Is there no such thing as a cosmopolitan nationalism? Is it impossible that a partisan of American literature should also know and appreciate English, Russian, and German literature, or that such a partisan should insist that every national literature be judged on its own terms and not be faulted for failing to resemble one of the others?

This kind of cosmopolitan nationalism has, in fact, been present in the American literary world since the beginning. Ralph Waldo Emerson called in 1834 for a distinctively American literature to replace the feeble imitations of English literature then being produced by American writers; but he also knew and esteemed the national literatures of England and Germany; in fact, he has often been accused by his detractors of being little more than a popularizer of Carlyle and Kant. Nearly a century after Emerson, H. L. Mencken rose to national prominence as a literary critic by calling for a national literature which would be unmistakably American in character, but which would also live up to the high standard of artistic excellence which Mencken believed was routinely lived up to by European writers. And just the other day Tom Wolfe told the *Saturday Review* that "in the arts and in all matters that relate to the intellectual, we still have a colonial complex. It's always better if it comes from France or someplace similar. It's really very funny. V. F. Calverton coined the term 'colonial complex' way back in the Twenties, saying 'now it's all over, we've found our own.' Except it's utterly not true." (*SR*, April 1981)

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Wolfe is right. We haven't found our own. We haven't found it even though it's lying all around us in plain view. We've been carefully taught from childhood by almost all of our teachers and journalists to devalue or disregard our native literary traditions in favor of English or French traditions. And as examples of great American writers we've been offered not Jack London but Henry James, not Ken Kesey but Philip Roth, not Henry Miller but Saul Bellow — that is, we've been offered a gaggle of second-rate practitioners of European arts, writers who are American only in the irrelevant sense of having lived from birth in the United States.

Cultural nationality is a good deal more than mere geography, however. It might be said, in fact, that geography has scarcely anything to do with the matter of nationality. A man's country is not whatever country he happens to live in; it is whatever country he can live in most happily. And if, as Thoreau said, most men lead lives of quiet desperation, this is partly because most men live their lives in unwitting exile from their true countries.

"A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a nationality," John Stuart Mill wrote, "if they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and any others...." And such common sympathies care nothing for geography. This is why so many of the most characteristically American writers have been adult immigrants from other countries. Offhand one can think of figures as diverse as Lafcadio Hearn, Aldous Huxley, Ayn Rand, and Vladimir Nabokov to illustrate the point. These writers came to America in the first place precisely because they felt at home among its traditions, comfortable with its cultural heritage, and sympathetic to the peculiarities of its national character.

Consider the case of Vladimir Nabokov. Nabokov spent the first 20 years of his life in Russia, the second 20 in Western Europe (mostly in Berlin, London, and Paris), the third 20 in America, and the fourth not-quite-20 back in Western Europe (this time in Montreux, Switzerland). But from the time he first arrived in the United States in 1940, he regarded America as his country. When he moved to Montreux in 1960 to be near his son Dmitri Nabokov (the opera singer and translator), it was not to a new home he moved, but to a hotel. "I am an American writer, born in Russia and educated in England where I studied French literature, before spending 15 years in Germany," he told *Playboy* in 1963. "I am living in Switzerland for purely private reasons — family reasons and certain professional ones too, such as some special research for a special book. I hope to return very soon to America...." Three years later, still in Montreux, still in the same hotel, he told another interviewer from another magazine that although he had "always maintained, even as a schoolboy in Russia, that the nationality of a worthwhile writer is of secondary importance ... I think of myself today as an American writer who has once been a Russian one."

Nabokov retained his naturalized American citizenship after his move to Montreux, he continued to write his novels in English rather than in the Russian or French with which he was equally proficient, and he continued to publish his books through U.S. publishers. He also worked in all the most distinctively American genres: science fiction (*The Waltz Invention*, *Ada*), the murder mystery (*Pale Fire*), and, of course, Symbolism — he was the greatest American Symbolist since Poe, the man who invented Symbolism 150 years ago. Moreover, he was a thoroughgoing individualist — a classical liberal, in fact—in his politics. "[S]ince my youth," he told *Playboy* in 1963, "my political outlook has remained as bleak and changeless as an old gray rock. It is classical to the point of triteness. Freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of art." Only the individual interested him, he insisted. "I don't give a damn for the group, the community, the masses, and so forth." He was originally attracted to America for exactly such political reasons as these, of course, but having arrived, he stayed on to discover others, like America's "rich intellectual life and ... easygoing, good-natured atmosphere," to say nothing of "its great libraries."

Yet he never came back. Instead he lived out his life after 1960 as a transient, a hotel guest with no permanent address, a man without a country. And it is only since his death in 1977 that he has begun at last to be regarded in his own country, America, with the critical respect which has long been his due. Lately his reputation has received another boost from the publication of the *Lectures on Literature* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 352 pp., $19.95) which he originally delivered during the 1950s at Cornell (where his students included such writers-to-be as Joanna Russ and Thomas Pynchon)—possibly because they focus on European writers and therefore strike our ministers of culture as safe to take seriously? Whatever the reason, the great success of the lectures has unfortunately obscured a number of other fine specimens of Nabokoviana which had the ill luck to be published at about the same time. In the short essay which follows this one, Frederic Reynolds discusses one such unjustly neglected book—a volume which would seem to be of particular interest to the reader interested in Nabokov's politics.

Jeff Riggenbach is West Coast editor of *LR*.

Two cheers for anti-statism

FREDERIC REYNOLDS

Vladimir Nabokov: America's Russian Novelist, *by G. M. Hyde. Marion Boyars, 230 pp., $6.95.*

IN THE SHIFTING, SYMbiotic relationships that link the creative literary artist, the literary critic, and the reader, it is the critic who occupies the most precarious position. The critic's position is precarious because it is doubly parasitic: dependent on the artist for a subject, and equally dependent on the reader for an object. If it is the artist's task to create an imaginary world that by some conjurer's trick bears a relation to the real world of the reader's experience, and if it is expedient—or vital—for the artist to invent new tools, new symbols, a new "language" to effect this miracle of illusion made truth, then it is the critic's task to "interpret" this language, to make pellucid what is opaque, and to make accessible what is difficult. Should there be a failure, a breakdown in this delicate communicative chain, the artist can retreat behind the veil of "artistic integrity," while the reader can toss the book in the trash. For the critic, there is nowhere to hide.

As if this were not enough, there are authors whose reputations for craft and cleverness are so daunting as to humble the cautious critic, and incite the reckless one. Such an author is the late Vladimir Nabokov. It is to the credit of critic G.M. Hyde, then, that his study *Vladimir Nabokov: America's Russian Novelist* is neither self-effacing nor flamboyant. Hyde's book, recently published in paperback by Marion Boyars, was completed shortly before Nabokov's death in 1977, and it offers to the reader analyses of all 18 of Nabokov's novels. (Hyde deliberately narrows the scope of his study to exclude Nabokov's non-fiction, drama, and shorter works.)

Who was Vladimir Nabokov? He is, of course, widely recognized as the author of *Lolita*. What may be less well known is that Nabokov was one of the many twentieth

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century intellectuals whose lives were warped by "the idiotic and despicable regimes" that have blighted our era. According to the brief chronology provided in Hyde's book, Nabokov's life was warped by politics not just once, but repeatedly. Nabokov was born in 1899 in St. Petersburg. His father was a distinguished classical-liberal politician who on one occasion was incarcerated for his anti-Tsarist opinions. In 1919 the Nabokov family fled from the Bolshevists to Turkey on a Greek fruit boat. The family reestablished itself in Berlin's exile community, where Nabokov's father edited the leading liberal emigré newspaper. In 1922 the father was assassinated for his political opinions, by a Russian rightist who later became one of Hitler's assistants. The young Nabokov was again forced to flee with his family, to France and then to America, to escape from the Nazis (leaving behind his renowned collection of butterflies — Nabokov enjoyed a separate international reputation as a lepidopterist, and another as a composer of chess problems). Not all of the Nabokovs escaped. In 1945 Sergei, Vladimir's eldest brother, died in a Nazi prison camp.

Given this all too intimate acquaintance with the State, what does Nabokov the artist have to say to us? A reading of Hyde's study reveals three related themes in Nabokov's work: the personal, the political, and the aesthetic. The personal themes reflect the concerns of a sensitive and gentle man who has lost a great deal in the course of his life. Nabokov's work is suffused with a quiet nostalgia, and with a respect for culture, language, morality, and other time-binding human endeavors that cannot be ripped away by the nearest thug in a brown shirt. On the other hand, Nabokov's politics reflected no such gentility. His contempt for the State was matched only by his fascination with the growth and transformation of the individual. For a man whose life was hounded by "imbecilic jackboots," this fascination reveals an awesome faith in humanity. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Nabokov offers to us an important view of the utility of art. As Hyde puts it, "His strenuous defense of his liberty of conscience ... must have influenced his conception of his art as a looking-glass land of truth and freedom." (Hyde's interpretation of Nabokov's aesthetics is impressively accurate, and can stand comparison to Nabokov's own *Lectures on Literature,* Fredson Bowers editor, recently published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.)

Nabokov's unique artistic method arises from this view of art, and it is his method that has daunted many previous critics. For Nabokov was one of the finest stylists of the English language. He wrote an English of gem quality: colorful, corruscating, and cold. His stiletto-like passages underscore the flabby, flatulent prose on which so much "serious literature" hangs. Nabokov had an unerring eye for absurdity in both life and narrative, and he unfailingly subjected it to assault from his most devastating weapon: a corrosive, withering humor. As Hyde notes, "[P]astiche and parody are in his work essentially comic versions of *ostranenie.*" *Ostranenie,* an important concept in Russian literature, is (again quoting Hyde) "the defamiliarization of the world, the suspension of the conceptual framework that shapes experience." With his immense cleverness, Nabokov lay traps for the careless reader as well as the over-eager exigist. These puns, puzzles, and blind alleys are, says Hyde, more than a mere mannerism, because to Nabokov, "art is nature's handmaid, serving to reveal truth by means of a complex assault on habit." This kind of assault is characteristic of Nabokov's artistic method. It is intended as a slap to the reader, that he may blink his eyes and see this looking-glass land *afresh.*

Hyde's critical skills (and weaknesses) are especially well displayed in his chapter on "History as Nightmare," in which he discusses Nabokov's two explicitly political novels, *Invitation to a Beheading* (1935, 1960), and *Bend Sinister* (1947). It is in these two novels that Nabokov's art, politics, and humanity are most successfully blended.

Invitation to a Beheading relates the imprisonment of Cincinnatus C., who is jailed and sentenced to death by some ludicrous regime for the crime of "gnostic turpitude," a crime so hideous that it must be named only in whispers or referred to euphemistically as "opaqueness" in a world where everyone is literally "transparent." *Invitation* is, as Hyde correctly notes, "one of Nabokov's most mannerist and ornamental" novels, inviting comparison to Kafka for "its combination of political and metaphysical allegory." Allegory it surely is, for the reality which envelops Cincinnatus becomes increasingly bizarre. He spends his time trying to find out the date of his execution, while the major figures in his life parade by like circus clowns. He desires freedom, but only achieves it when he stops placing his hope for salvation in others, when he turns inward, searching for "the elusive truth ... hidden at the heart of his experience." Cincinnatus is truly one of Colin Wilson's "Outsiders." He finds his truth, his identity, on the chopping block, and *Invitation* ends optimistically, as Cincinnatus sheds his chrysalis for a better reality "where, to judge by the voices, stood beings akin to him."

Bend Sinister is one of the great contemporary anti-statist novels. It is the story of Adam Krug, philosopher, and his courageous battle against a totalitarian, Central European state. There has been a revolution, and Paduk, a particularly mediocre schoolmate of Krug's, is the new dictator. Paduk rules as chairman of the "Ekwilist" party (say it aloud), and Nabokov savagely lampoons the development and tenets of the whole berserk philosophy of "Ekwilism." As Hyde puts it, Krug is "subjected to very literal harassment and shut away in a very material prison for a crime much less rarified than Cincinnatus's — non-cooperation with a boring and brutal dictatorship." Krug wins his battle for integrity and independence, but like his creator, he pays a great cost; his career, his friends, his child, and ultimately his sanity are lost, lost to the grossest kind of stupidity and error. As Nabokov himself has said, *Bend Sinister* reminds us of "the torture an intense tenderness is subjected to." Taken with *Invitation,* these two novels are both a plea for and a defense of the total liberty of the human spirit.

Hyde's understanding of this seems only partial. Thoroughly grounded in Russian literature, Hyde is useful in pointing out the obscure allusion, or the multilingual pun. His insights into Nabokov's views on art are accurate and, for the most part, clearly presented. He seems weakest in handling Nabokov's uncompromising politics, and has a tendency at times to overlook meaning that is overt, or even read it right out of the text. His chapter on History as Nightmare concludes where I believe it should have commenced, with the statement that the two novels' "vindication of individual freedom is inevitably political."

Overall, of course, Hyde's book is quite useful. In his preface to his son's English translation of *Invitation to a Beheading,* Nabokov wrote of his work, "It is a violin in the void. The worlding will deem it a trick. Old men will hurriedly turn from it to regional romances and the lives of public figures. No clubwoman will thrill. ... But ... I know a few readers who will jump up, ruffling their hair." It is the accomplishment of G.M. Hyde that now many more readers may know this agitated state, much to their profit and delight. ❑

Frederic Reynolds is a South Florida banker and student of literature.

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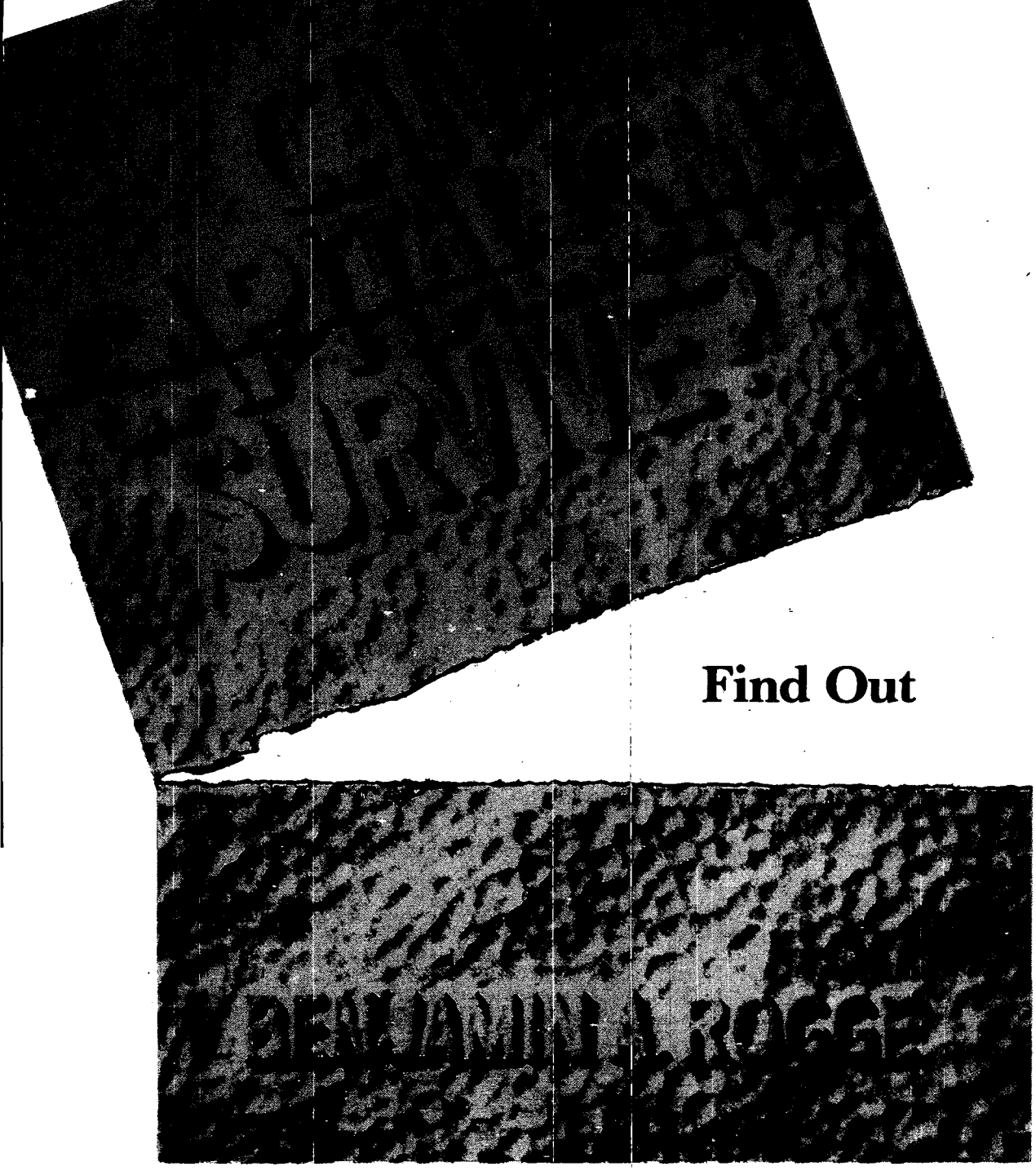

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